THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE;

OR

The HISTORY of Mrs. GILBERT.

By Mr. THISTLETHWAITE.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

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THE CHILD OF MISFORTUNE.

CHAP. I.

Containing the Characters of a Welch *Antiquarian, and a Country Curate. An unexpected Viſit. Some Strictures on the Ancient and Modern Drama. A Man that can live by one Trade is wrong to follow two: And ſome Architectonic Obſervations.*

IN a ſmall village in Glamorganſhire, but little noticed in hiſtory, lived Mr. David Lloyd, who will make no inconſiderable figure in the following ſheets. He was of a humane and benevolent diſpoſition, and of an open and generous temper, tho' at times exceedingly warm, and impatient of contradiction. His paternal eſtate, though ſmall, was yet ſufficient to ſupply him with all the neceſſaries of life; and notwithſtanding his manſion, by the innovations of Time, began to ſtand in need of no ſmall repairs; yet as the Gothic decorations of its front betrayed evident marks of

its having withſtood the fury of ages, he would not have exchanged it for the completeſt modern-built edifice in the three kingdoms.

His principal companion was Mr. Ephraim Codex, Curate of the Pariſh, whoſe good qualities were a ſufficient recommendation to the eſteem of his pariſhioners; as he conſtantly attended the duties of his function, played excellently well upon the violin, and was indiſputably acknowledged to be the beſt cribbage-player in the village.

As he always faſhioned his diſcourſe according to the underſtanding of his audience, he was in general attended to; and it was but ſeldom that his admonitions failed of effect. He was well aware how much it behoves mankind to be perpetually upon the watch, and was therefore particularly careful, in his diſcourſes, to introduce ſomething that might demand their attention; ſuch as the wonderful hiſtories of Bel and the Dragon; Suſanna and the Two Elders; and the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace; which, to his congregation, were not the leſs acceptable for being Apocryphal.

If any two of his pariſhioners had a quarrel, he admoniſhed them againſt the deadly ſin of hatred and uncharitableneſs, and enjoined them to ſhake hands in token of a mutual forgiveneſs and reconciliation, or of deciding the diſpute by a boxing-match.

This method of ſettling differences was ſo very concluſive, that he was ſeldom troubled to exert ſo extraordinary a mark of his authority; more eſpecially as he obliged the vanquiſhed party to aſk pardon, on pain of a ſevere drubbing from himſelf, which he was every way qualified to beſtow, if one might judge from his athletic limbs. Indeed, it was but ſeldom he had occaſion to proceed ſo far, as the parties generally paid obedience to his firſt injunction.

The profits of his Curacy were ſo ſmall, that he

was

was conſtrained to encreaſe his finances by retailing a hogſhead of cyder for the accommodation of his friends; by which means, as his neighbours entertained the higheſt opinion of his rectitude and underſtanding, his houſe was become the theatre for deciding all diſputes relative to ſtrayed ſheep, and politics; and he himſelf was enabled to paſs through life with no ſmall degree of decency and credit.

It was here, one pleaſant evening, the Curate was entertaining Mr. Lloyd and ſome others of his gueſts with the abſolute neceſſity of keeping a perpetual bridle upon their paſſions; which he proceeded to demonſtrate logically: but ſcarcely had he recapitulated the *major* of his argument, when the further proſecution of it was interrupted by the entrance of two young men, whoſe appearance beſpoke what is commonly called the *ſhabby-genteel*. He who appeared the ſuperior was habited in a looſe brown frock, and a ſcarlet waiſtcoat embelliſhed with what was once gold lace, but which at preſent appeared tarniſhed with ſo many different colours, that it would require no common knowledge of metals to give it a proper name.

The other had on a coat that was once black, but now approached more to a brown; beneath which appeared a waiſtcoat of blue ſattin, with embroidered button-holes, that had out-lived the faſhion at leaſt half a century. This dreſs, with the addition of a large laced hat, gave the wearer an air of importance in a place where plainneſs and decency only were conſidered as neceſſary.

They were attended by a female, whoſe figure correſponded with her companions: her head was dreſſed in a taſte that diſcovered more fancy than judgment; — a gown which in days of yore was ſilk (and ſeemed originally to be made for a perſon at leaſt a foot ſhorter than herſelf,) and which diſcovered beneath it a petticoat of many colours.

Theſe uncommon perſonages ſeated themſelves with as little ceremony as they had entered; not much to the liking of the company upon whom they had ſo unceremoniouſly intruded, and whoſe looks began to evince their diſſatisfaction at the behaviour of their viſitors.

The Lady's viſage expreſſed an uncommon ſhare of vicacity;—her partners, on the contrary, pourtrayed every mark of diſcontent and uneaſineſs

All at once, after having obſerved the gloomy countenances of her companions, the heroine, throwing herſelf into a theatrical attitude, exclaimed, addreſſing herſelf to the gentleman in the laced hat.

"Why does the great Duke Humphrey knit his browe?"

This line ſeemed to affect him like the ſtroke of a torpedo; for inſtantly collecting his ideas, he, without deigning the leaſt anſwer to the Lady's enquiry, vociferated to his companion, who appeared the ſuperior,

"Theſe hoary traitors, Jaffier, call us all villains!
"Art thou one, my friend?

"D——n! But 'tis no matter; 'tis no matter!—"And yet to meet with ſuch uſage from an ignorant, "proud upſtart! a Welch Juſtice!—Conſume "me, but I have a mind to"—What he had a mind to do he had no opportunity to unfold, being juſt then interrupted by the Curate, who admoniſhed him againſt the pernicious practice of ſwearing; which the other regarded no otherwiſe than by beſtowing upon his monitor a look of the moſt ſovereign contempt.

The Curate, who was accuſtomed not only to be heard, but likewiſe to be obeyed, in ſpite of the other's inattention proceeded thus in his admonition:

"Your ſwearing, Sir, is in reality detrimental to

" to no one but yourſelf; yet, as every good man " would wiſh to preſerve the purity of his morals " uncorrupted; and as this preſervation in a great " meaſure depends upon our diſcountenancing too " great a familiarity with ſuch examples; I muſt " deſire, nay, I muſt *inſiſt* upon your either diveſting " yourſelf of that habit, at leaſt while in this com- " pany, or elſe, of immediately quitting this houſe. " This I have doubly a right to demand; firſt as a " profeſſor of that Goſpel which has ſo ſtrictly en- " joined us to the contrary; and ſecondly, as the " ſpiritual director of this ſociety, whom I conſider " as my younger brethren."

No ſooner had Mr. Rattle (for that was the Gentleman's name) got intelligence of the Curate's function, than he whiſpered his companion—— " O, dam me, Jack, a parſon!—I'll ſmoke him.

" And ſo, old Gentleman!—What, I ſuppoſe " you believe in ſuch a place as Hell, eh?—And " yet for all your pretended ſanctity, I warrant you " would wink at a little harmleſeſs fornication. Ah, " you Parſons are the very Devil for a wench!"

During this oration, the Curate's countenance underwent every kind of change; but at the concluſion he lifted up his eyes and hands, and exclaimed with a groan.

" From Fornication, and all other deadly ſins, good Lord " deliver us!"

Rattle, without ſeeming to mind him, proceeded, addreſſing himſelf to his companion—" You know " Dick Pliant?—Ah, I ſhall never forget him!—I " met Dick one Sunday at Oxford, and he would " fain prevail upon me to go to church to hear him " preach. To oblige him, I conſented; for Dick " is a very honeſt fellow, and ſings an excellent " ſong. Well, to church I went, and Dick gave us

" a tedious exhortation againſt drinking and whor-
" ing; which being over, we adjourned to the
" Mitre, where we met ſome roaring dogs belong-
" ing to Merton College. I tipped them the wink,
" and we plied honeſt Dick ſo cloſely, that in two
" hours he roared a bawdy catch, then fell faſt
" aſleep; and that his doctrine might not ſuffer by
" his example, we in that condition put him to bed
" to a girl of the town. But the cream of the jeſt
" is, that in the night, having occaſion to go down
" ſtairs, he, in endeavouring to return to his own
" chamber, miſtook the door, and got into another
" room, where, by the light of a taper, he diſcovered
" the pious Proctor of their college faſt locked in
" the arms of his old acquaintance Polly Quaver."

The Curate ſtarted from his ſeat,—walked twice acroſs the room,—clenched his fiſt,—groaned thrice,—and ſat down again.

Mr. Lloyd, who had hitherto liſtened very attentively, and had the utmoſt veneration for the name and character of a clergyman, hearing his friend treated ſo very unceremoniouſly, expreſſed a doubt as to the truth of Mr. Rattle's relation; or even that any perſon who had a character to loſe, would willingly admit ſuch a profligate in his company.

The Gentleman in the ſcarlet waiſtcoat, who from his firſt entrance had ſcarcely uttered a ſyllable, taking this as an inſult to their dignity, inſtantly ſtarted up, and fiercely cocking his hat in the face of the honeſt Cambrian, exclaimed, " Sir, we are
" companions for any man, and belong to a com-
" pany of Comedians now at Cardiff, over whom I
" have the honour to preſide as Manager; and give
" me leave to inform you, Sir, there is not a better
" travelling Company in England. As we intend to
" go farther to the ſouthward, we had thoughts of
" calling here by the way; " How-

" but that it pleas'd the Juſtice to refuſe us."

" However, he may, perhaps, one day or other, " be ſenſible of his error in rejecting the ſervices of " Gentlemen of abilities."

At the word *Gentlemen* Mr. Lloyd's eyes gliſtened like thoſe of a ſnake, and every limb appeared convulſed. After ſurveying this Stage-monarch for ſome moments with the moſt contemptuous ſneer, he aſked him whether the qualification of ſwearing, or his profeſſion of ſtage-playing, intitled him to that appellation; a profeſſion which, in the eye of the Law, is conſidered as infamous, and whoſe followers are denominated Vagrants. He proceeded:—" Had " acting retained that genuine ſimplicity which " characteriſed the Grecian Stage, it might ſtill " have juſtly demanded encouragement. The " Stage, then, was as artleſs and unrefined, as its " ſubjects were unpoliſhed and innocent. A ſmall " eminence ſodded over, and ſhaded at top by the " branches of the neighbouring trees neatly inter- " woven, diſplayed a ſimplicity unattainable by all " the efforts of modern ingenuity. In thoſe times " dramatic exhibitions were truly laudable, as they " anſwered the greateſt and beſt purpoſes, namely " thoſe of countenancing Virtue, and diſcouraging " Vice; when Satire, void of perſonality, was more " nobly employed in correcting national luxury and " effeminacy. But now, ſince every ſpecies of the " Drama evinces ſuch manifeſt corruption; ſince " Tragedy is degenerated into bombaſt, Comedy " into an amorous vehicle to convey looſe deſcrip- " tion, and Farce into abſurdity; and moreover, " ſince theatrical performers, inſtead of that humility " which ſhould ever appear in them, affect the cox- " comb, and diſhonour their Betters by an uſurpa- " tion of the word Gentlemen; it is highly neceſ- " ſary to bring ſuch perſons to a right knowledge of " themſelves, by ſhewing them what they really are " in their proper colours."

Our ſtage-ſtruck Hero, at the word *betters*, with a kind of exulting ſmile placed his arms behind him, in order the more fully to diſplay

" The flaming honours of his broider'd veſt,"

and at the ſame time ſurveyed our honeſt Briton from top to toe, endeavouring to find out ſomething in his appearance, which, according to *his* ideas, conſtituted the Gentleman. Indeed, Mr. Lloyd's dreſs (tho' in the wearer's eyes invaluable and elegant) diſplayed more cauſe for admiration than envy. It had been in poſſeſſion of his family for at leaſt a century and a half; having been actually copied from that of his famous countryman, the heroic Sir Edward Herbert. Mr. Lloyd preſerved theſe antiquated habiliments with the ſame devotion he would his Creed, never appearing in them but on holidays, or in commemoration of ſome remarkable family-event; which was the preſent caſe.

The Manager having ſufficiently indulged his curioſity by rudely gazing at theſe ſacred relicks, turned to his companion, and ludicrouſly obſerved, that it ſeemed to have been ſtolen out of the wardrobe of Oliver Cromwell.

The choleric Welchman, who was a profeſſed enemy to all Republican principles, doubly exaſperated at this obſervation, which he conſidered as meant to convey a reflection that might tend to degrade the dignity of his dreſs, inſiſted upon the intruders being obliged inſtantly to quit the room; which they as obſtinately refuſed to do, alledging in their favour the undoubted privilege every man had of entering into a public-houſe, paying for what he ordered. This plea not appearing ſatisfactory to the parties on the other ſide, they prepared to expel them by force; when ſo violent an exertion of their power was rendered unneceſſary by the ſudden entrance

entrance of ſeveral men, who inſtantly ſeized upon our two Heroes on a ſuſpicion of being guilty of a highway robbery. Mr. Lloyd now began to reſume his remarks, making ſeveral pertinent reflections on the word *Gentleman*, not much to the liking of the culprits who were preſently uſhered away to the next Juſtice of the Peace for examination.

As they received no orders reſpecting the Lady, ſhe was permitted to paſs unmoleſted. Her behaviour, during the diſpute with her companions, proving truly unexceptionable, induced Mr. Lloyd, whoſe natural benevolence of heart was unwilling that the innocent ſhould ſuffer for the fault of the guilty, to do ſomething in her favour: he accordingly informed her, that as ſhe had a long walk back to Cardiff, ſhe was welcome to a ſpare bed at his houſe for that night, which would the better enable her to bear the fatigue of walking on the morrow.

She was very thankful for the offer, which ſhe readily accepted, and addreſſed him as follows:

"Perhaps, Sir, you may wonder how I could "bear up againſt this ſtroke of Fortune, which, by "ſo unexpectedly depriving me of my companions, "had apparently rendered me deſtitute of friends. "But, alas! I have been the ſport of Fortune from "my youth. Accuſtomed to diſappointments, I "begin to conſider them as ſo intimately connected "with the moſt ordinary tranſactions of my life, "that not to meet with them would conſtitute a "diſappointment; I therefore endeavour to behave "with as much outward eaſe and gaiety as a conſci-"ouſneſs of my misfortunes will permit me; and "as I always live but in expectation of meeting "with ſome adverſe ſtroke of Fate, I am the better "enabled to face it with reſolution. To this cir-"cumſtance, Sir, muſt be imputed the tranquillity "of my behaviour at the fate of the unfortunate men,

"whom

" whom I ſo recently conſidered as my companions.
" I hope the ſuſpicion is falſely grounded; for,
" however culpable their behaviour has been this
" evening. I cannot deem them ſo criminal as to
" merit the accuſation laid to their charge. How-
" ever, Sir, I gladly and gratefully embrace your
" friendly offer and the more ſo, as it comes at a
" time when I could neither expect, nor indeed
" hope for it."

The pertinency and modeſty of her reply gained her the eſteem of every one who heard her; more particularly of Mr. Lloyd, who preſently after took his leave of the worthy Curate and the reſt of his neighbours, and conducted the Lady to his own manſion, where he introduced her to his houſe-keeper, Mrs. Gwynn, to whom he related the manner he had met with her, and directed a bed to be prepared for her.

Whilſt Mrs. Gwynn was gone to execute this neceſſary order, Mr. Lloyd endeavoured to entertain his viſitor with a relation of the antiquity of his houſe. " Pray, Madam (ſays he,) have you ever
" read the Hiſtory of Howell Caradoc, Prince of
" South Wales?" Upon her anſwering him in the negative, he proceeded :—" This houſe, Madam,
" was formerly in poſſeſſion of, and built by, that
" immortal hero, and amongſt other things is a
" proof, that architecture was not then in ſo bar-
" barous a ſtate as many of the Moderns would have
" us believe. Obſerve the uniformity of theſe pillars;
" the ſtrength of the baſe; the beauty of the capitals;
" the exquiſite neatneſs of the cielings, and incom-
" parable regularity of the dome! Now ſhew me
" as much from the boaſted effects of modern im-
" provement. A wall ſix inches thick, liable to be
" overturned by every blaſt of wind; a houſe con-
" taining three or four diminutive chambers, ſcarcely
" in

" in ſize fit for cupboards; and a hall that you can
" ſcarcely turn a wheel-barrow in! Such have been
" the effects deduced from our vain pretenſions to
" taſte and refinement; pretenſions which only
" tend to diſgrace the nation in general, and which
" every man of ſenſe would endeavour to oppoſe.
" For my own part, impaired as it is, I heartily
" prefer my old manſion to thoſe rocking cabins,
" however they may be ſanctified by the names of
" Faſhion, Improvement, and Taſte. I have room
" to turn and breathe, without danger of ſuffocation;
" I can invite my neighbours to viſit me, without
" being put to any inconvenience for want of room;
" and I have always a chamber and a bed for a friend,
" without myſelf being compelled to ſleep in the
" kitchen."

The Houſe keeper being now returned from executing her commiſſion, they ſat down to ſupper, and ſhortly after retired to reſt.

Our Heroine began quickly to evidence the truth of Mr. Lloyd's declaration reſpecting the little danger of ſuffocation from the contractedneſs of his chamber. On the contrary, ſome panes of glaſs being broke in the window, the air, occaſioned by the ſpaciouſneſs of the room, kept ſo perpetual a concert, that, tired and fatigued as ſhe was, it was no ſmall time before ſhe could compoſe herſelf to ſleep.

In the morning ſhe aroſe much refreſhed, with an intention of renewing her journey: but Mr. Lloyd, who had conceived a more than ordinary affection for her, inſiſted upon her ſtaying to breakfaſt; which being over, he addreſſed himſelf to her nearly in the following manner:

" Accuſe me not, Madam, of rudeneſs or impertinence, if I expreſs a deſire to be made acquainted
" with a few incidents of your life. Curioſity is a
" paſſion inherent in every one: it is the maſter-key
" of inſtruction, and the mother of knowledge.

" We

"We make enquiry of thoſe whoſe acquaintance "with mankind is greater than our own, from a "double motive, both for inſtruction and amuſe- "ment. Pardon me, Madam, if I ſay I expect from "you a full gratification in each of theſe particulars. "Beſides, before you depart from hence, it will be "neceſſary to make ſome enquiry reſpecting the "young men, your late companions; perhaps it was "a miſtake, and they are not guilty of the criminal "action laid to their charge. That taſk I mean to "take upon myſelf. In return, if you will favour "me by granting what I have already deſired, "whatever obligation you may imagine you lay un- "der to me, I ſhall conſider as amply recompenſed."

"Sir (replied ſhe,) if you can poſſibly reap any "pleaſure from a recital of my misfortunes, far be "it from me to deny you that ſatisfaction; nor think "that I had forgot thoſe unfortunate men, whoſe "fate I cannot but feel for. No, Sir; nothing but "an unwillingneſs of encreaſing the obligations I "already labour under, could have hindered me "from requeſting you, before now, to make the "enquiry."

"Talk no more of obligations (interrupted he); "your acquieſcing in my requeſt will ſufficiently "cancel them."

After a few minutes employed in recollection ſhe began as follows:

CHAP. II.

A Trip to London. *A pathetic Scene; and the Death of a Benefactor.*

"IN the hiſtory I am now going to relate to you, there are ſome circumſtances in which Pru- dence would readily acquit me, ſhould I caſt a veil over them; but, Sir, the generoſity of your behaviour

to

to me, together with ſomething unaccountably intereſting in your appearance, oblige me to depart from all formality, and to preſent you with every indiſcretion of my youth, well preſuaded that the only method to gain your eſteem, is by firmly adhering to truth.

"The firſt recollection I have of myſelf is, my being ſituated a few miles from London with a woman who had the care of nurſing me; in which capacity ſhe acquitted herſelf with a tenderneſs rarely to be met with in a perſon whoſe employment is the means of providing her with the neceſſaries of life. Twice a-year we were viſited by a Lady, who always appeared remarkably fond of me, and never left me without manifeſting many very viſible tokens of affection.

"The little preſents ſhe never failed to make me, together with that apparent ſolicitude for my welfare, could not but endear her to one, who, unaccuſtomed to any other parent, conſidered her in the ſole light of Father, Mother, and Friend.

"I was now in my fourteenth year, rather tall for my age, when Miſs Wilmot (for ſo I ſhall call her) came at her uſual time, and after expreſſing the higheſt ſatisfaction at my figure and appearance, told me ſhe intended ſhortly to take me with her to London. My young mind was in an inſtant in arms, and all my ſenſes ſo abſorbed in the hopes of ſeeing the Metropolis, of which I had conceived ſuch flattering ideas, that no ſacrifice in my power would have been long wanting to accompliſh the means of fulfilling this ardent deſire.

"She left me with a promiſe of returning again in a few days to take me with her. The intervening time you may well imagine, Sir, appeared to me of uncommon length; however, in about a fortnight, I one morning had the pleaſing ſatisfaction to ſee her

chariot

chariot ſtop at the door; out which ſhe came accompanied by a Gentleman I had never before ſeen. He noticed me with a particular attention, and with the tendereſt air imaginable ſeated me in the chariot, which in a few hours conveyed us to London.

"I need not remark the effect ſuch a multiplicity of objects had upon a mind whoſe utmoſt knowledge of the world had never exceeded the limits of an obſcure village; ſuffice it to ſay, my ideas were more than anſwered—I was delighted! I was tranſported!

"We ſtopped at a genteel houſe in the neighbourhood of Berkley-Square, which I found belonged to my Patroneſs. As Miſs Wilmot kept much company, my time paſſed away very agreeably: ſhe herſelf attended to my education, and under her inſpection I was inſtructed in moſt of the accompliſhments uſually beſtowed upon our ſex; ſuch as French, dancing, muſic, and other polite parts of education. As I had the uſe of an elegant library, I inſenſibly contracted a particular reliſh for books; amongſt which our own Dramatic Poets ſtood foremoſt in my eſteem.

"The fire of Shakeſpear, the pathos of Otway, the wit of Congreve; got ſuch a prodigious hold of my inclinations, that at every leiſure moment I was perpetually amuſing myſelf with a repetition of ſome ſpeech out of theſe my favourite Authors. By indulging this ridiculous paſſion, I imperceptibly loſt a reliſh for every other amuſement, and eagerly embraced all opportunities of gratifying my inclinations for dramatic exhibitions, by attending the Theatres as often as poſſible.

"Miſs Wilmot, who conſidered my Quixotiſm in no other light than the love of an innocent amuſement, never ſcrupled to oblige me whenever I requeſted to be preſent at a Play, which you may imagine, Sir, was but too frequent. This indulgence of her's, inſtead of proving any real ſervice, on the contrary operated as oil on fire; augmented my deſires,

and

and fed thoſe craving inclinations which it ought rather to have aſſiſted in allaying.

" In this manner I paſſed on till I arrived at the age of ſeventeen, the fatal period to my happineſs; when I was to experience the fallibility of human bliſs, and the abſurdity of expecting a continuance of felicity, tho' ſtrengthened with every advantage of apparent ſecurity.

" It will be neceſſaary, before I proceed any further, Sir, to inform you that Mr. Gardon, the Gentleman who accompanied Miſs Wilmot at the time ſhe firſt brought me to London, went very ſoon afterwards in a diſtinguiſhed character to the Indies; from whence I believe he is never yet returned.

" I was now arrived at an age when the paſſions are apt to take fire at the leaſt ſpark. I was in poſſeſſion of every thing neceſſary to render life comfortable; nevertheleſs, one circumſtance grieved me. Notwithſtanding the reſpectable footing I was upon in Miſs Wilmot's family, there appeared ſomething ſo very myſterious reſpecting my birth, that I could not eaſily reconcile myſelf to it. I had often expreſſed my impatience on that ſubject to her, when ſhe always ſtopt me by ſaying, " My dear Louiſa, " ſuſpend your curioſity; matters are not yet ſuf- " ficiently ripe for an explanation." This injunction was far from proving agreeable; however, I lived in daily expectation of receiving ſome ſatisfaction on that point, when all my hopes were blaſted by the death of my benefactreſs.

" She was taken with a violent fever, which baffled the ſkill of moſt eminent phyſicians. When ſhe found her laſt hour approaching, ſhe ſent for me to her bedſide. I obeyed her with eyes bathed in tears. The moment ſhe ſaw me, ſhe appeared more compoſed than ſhe had been ſome time before.—She ſeized one of my hands; and after viewing me ſome minutes

minutes with a look of inexpreſſible ſweetneſs, which even her illneſs could not efface, ſhe addreſſed me thus:

"Louiſa! the phyſicians have deceived me. I "find myſelf every moment more aſſured that my "end is approaching. This life is a trifle I have "long ſince learnt to deſpiſe. But to leave thee, my "child! to leave thee expoſed to every ſnare which "Cunning and Artifice may lay for Innocence, is a "taſk I am unable to bear. O ſtrengthen me, my "God! to bear this deprivation with fortitude; "teach me to yield a perfect obedience to thy will; "and enable me to fulfil this taſk with a thorough "dependance upon thy Providence! ——O, my "Louiſa! this world, this world, my child, is full "of wickedneſs. The moſt ſpecious appearances "are often aſſumed to ſerve the worſt purpoſes. "Be cautious, my darling!—Let Prudence mark "thy conduct. Liſten not to thoſe whoſe policy "may be productive of conſequences dreadful even "to imagine! But remember the dying words of "thy friend—Let Virtue guide thy ſteps; whilſt "ſhe is thy conductreſs, thou art ſafe! thou art "happy!"

"Here ſhe pauſed a while, but ſoon again re-ſumed her diſcourſe:

"My Louiſa! how hard, how very hard it is "to relinquiſh what the mind has long been taught "to eſteem!—Like a thankleſs miſer, my affections "have been placed upon earthly treaſures, neglect-"ing matters of more moment. But the Almighty "has thought proper to puniſh my idolatry. Soon "ſhall I be ſnatched from the ſum of my happineſs "in this world—from thee, my Louiſa!—I have "often promiſed (continued ſhe) to reveal the ſe-"cret of thy birth; but have hitherto refrained "from motives that will not now admit of an "explanation." "As

"As I perceived her ſpirits were nearly exhauſted, I prevailed with to her delay the Narrative till ſhe had ſomewhat recruited herſelf by a little reſt. With reluctance ſhe conſented, and I quitted her, agitated by a variety of different paſſions. I was anxiouſly eager to know how this affair would terminate, yet fearful for the event:—however, I had not long to indulge this reverie; being interrupted by the entrance of the nurſe, who brought me the melancholy news, that ſhe had juſt breathed her laſt. O, Sir, ! you may eaſily conceive how deeply I was affected by this intelligence. She had always treated me with the tenderneſs of a parent, indulged me in all my deſires, and miniſtered to my neceſſities like a friend. Never was there a more ſincere ſorrow than that which I experienced for her; and could my life have compenſated for the loſs of her's, in the mind I was then in, I ſhould not have heſitated to make the ſacrifice.

CHAP. III.

A new Acquaintance. A diſtreſsful Circumſtance. A Declaration of Love, and a Marriage.

"AS Miſs Wilmot only enjoyed an annuity for her own life, and as ſhe kept what is generally called the Beſt of Company, ſhe could not be expected to have died very rich. By her will I was appointed the ſole heireſs of all her effects; and I found myſelf, after I had diſpoſed of the furniture, worth upwards of two thouſand pounds. This ſum, by the advice of a friend, I placed in the hands of a capital tradeſman, for which I accepted of his bond, bearing intereſt.

"As I could not expect to live in that ſplendor I was wont to do when Miſs Wilmot was alive, I took lodgings in a cheaper part of the town; where, though

though ſurrounded by no ſuperfluous luxury, yet it was amply made amends for, by decency and order.

"On the ſame floor with myſelf lodged a gentleman who ſeemed to take a particular pleaſure in being noticed by me; — he was always putting himſelf in my way, and eagerly ſolicitous to ſpeak to me, though on the moſt trifling ſubjects. As I conſidered his behaviour as ariſing from no other motive than common civility, I was perfectly eaſy in regard to any conſequences that might reſult from ſuch an acquaintance.

"Mrs. Bruce, the miſtreſs of the houſe, came one afternoon into my chamber, and after ſome common-place converſation, aſked me how I approved of Mr. Gilbert, her lodger? I anſwered her with a great deal of indifference, that my acquaintance with him was too ſlight to admit of a proper reply. She inſtantly ſaid, "It is your own fault, Miſs, you are "not more intimately acquainted." She then launched forth encomiums on the generoſity and qualifications of this favourite of her's, and concluded by aſſuring me that Mr. Gilbert was deeply in love with me.

"As her converſation began to grow ſomewhat critical, I deſired her to deſiſt, as her freedom diſpleaſed me; and I was firmly reſolved to cultivate no acquaintance with any man whatever.

"As I heard no more from her or Mr. Gilbert on that head for ſome time, I expected, from the little encouragement I gave him, that he had quitted all thoughts of me, notwithſtanding he ſtill continued his civilities as much, or more than ever; but herein I was miſtaken.

"One day, as I was ſitting alone, reading the Play of Hamlet, he introduced himſelf of a ſudden; and obſerving me rather ſurpriſed, he apologized for his abrupt behaviour by ſaying, "I beg, Madam, "you will not be alarmed; I have juſt received a

"preſent

" preſent of ſome fine fruit, and I ſhall receive no " manner of ſatisfaction from it, unleſs you will " oblige me by partaking of it with me." Common civility obliged me, in return for his politeneſs, to aſk him to ſit down; he did ſo, and taking up the book I had juſt laid aſide, began to make divers critical obſervations upon ſome of the paſſages that appeared rather obſcure, and pointed out ſome particular beauties in others which had eſcaped my notice; in ſhort, unaccuſtomed as I was to comments, his converſation appeared ſo novel to me, that I began to conceive an extraordinary opinion of his judgment.

" From this time he was frequently with me; and as he always acompanied his viſits with ſome book (of which he had a handſome library) he generally found a hearty welcome. By accuſtoming myſelf to his converſation, my paſſion for the Drama began to revive more ſtrong than ever; and my romantic notions ſo far gained the aſcendancy over me, that I longed for every opportunity of indulging them.

" Notwithſtanding what Mrs. Bruce had advanced, he never once, during our intimacy hitherto, hinted the leaſt regard for my perſon, all his flatteries being directed to my mind. This, ſo far from offending me, made me rather conſider him as a perſon of a more refined underſtanding than the generality of mankind.

" Nothing can be more truly dangerous to our Sex, than when taught to behold their ſenſe and prudence in too high a light. —Truſting to this ſhallow ſtream, they too frequently venture ſo far as to loſe ſight of both.

" Mr. Gilbert's perſon was rather above the middle ſize; tall, without diſpleaſing the eye; of an excellent ſhape, fine dark eyes, and a fair complexion. Add to this, he poſſeſſed a pleaſing addreſs: ----- no wonder, then, that by his frequent viſits I began to

loſe

loſe much of my former indifference, and to behold him in quite an oppoſite light. As my intimacy with him authoriſed him to viſit me whenever he pleaſed, without ceremony, he was ſeldom a day abſent from me. He came in one evening, bringing with him the Gazette; and after having amuſed me by reading the news of the day, he proceeded, "Whereas a Com-"miſſion of Bankruptcy is iſſued out and awarded "againſt Iſrael Barter, of the Pariſh of St. Martin's "in the fields, Haberdaſher" —— I heard no more, but inſtantly fainted away. How long I continued ſo, I know not; but upon my recovering my ſenſes, I found myſelf in bed, attended by Mrs. Bruce, to whom I imparted the cauſe of my illneſs. She endeavoured to conſole me, by repreſenting things to me in beſt light probability would permit her, and by endeavouring to perſuade me that matters might yet be compromiſed with a very trifling loſs.

"The Afflicted are ever ready to graſp at the leaſt ſhadow of hope, and it requires but little perſuaſion to make us believe what we would wiſh to be true. Thus, by Mrs. Bruce's endeavours, I was partly reſtored to my uſual tranpuillity; which, however, was of no long duration.

"Mr. Gilbert, by my deſire, took upon himſelf the trouble of enquiring into the real ſtate of Mr. Barter's circumſtances, which were far from proving agreeable. It appeared that he had defrauded his creditors to an amazing amount, with which he was gone off; ſo that there was but little hope of Honeſty's ever influencing him ſo far as make him reſtore what he had ſo unjuſtly poſſeſſed himſelf of.

"As Hope began to retreat, Deſpair very viſibly gained ground, and all the horrors of my ſituation ſtared me in the face. — I was petrified, afflicted, and inconſolable ----- in brief, I reſigned myſelf to the blackeſt horror.

"As

"As I had never taken up the intereſt of my money, having hitherto ſubſiſted upon a ſmall ſum I had retained out of the principal, which was now nearly expended, I began to ſtand in need of a recruit. It is eaſy, Sir, to conjecture what were my reflections when I looked forwards. Nothing but Miſery met my fancy: I was likewiſe to add to my misfortune, nearly a quarter in arrears to Mrs. Bruce, who ſometimes ſeemed to hint to me the want of it.

"Mr. Gilbert ſtill viſited me as much, or more than ever; nor did the change in my circumſtances create any alteration in his behaviour to me: nay, he appeared, if poſſible more polite, always ſetting his imagination to work to find means to diſpel the melancholy that ſurrounded me, and at times condoling with me on my misfortune.

"He one day appeared before me, as tho' labouring under ſome viſible uneaſineſs. This was the more remarkable, as he had naturally an uncommon flow of ſpirits. Upon my taking notice of it, he begged I would indulge him a few minutes with my attention. —— Without waiting for my reply, he began thus: — "I know not, Madam, in what light you "will behold me after the declaration I am going to "make; but as my future happineſs or miſery ſole-"ly depends upon it, I ſhall make no apology for its "abruptneſs. —— In ſhort, Madam, I love you. — "Before the late unhappy change in your circum-"ſtances I dared not to cheriſh ſuch an idea; but, like "an arrant coward, I am encouraged by your mis-"fortunes, and emboldened by your loſſes.--- If you "think, Madam, I am not altogether unworthy the "honour of aſpiring to your hand, I ſhall conſider "this as the happieſt day of my life; — but if, on "the contrary, my paſſion ſhould meet with your "diſapprobation, however ſenſibly I may feel it, you "may depend upon my cloſing my lips for ever up-"on that ſubject."

"As

"As I thought there was ſomething at leaſt very frank and generous in his behaviour I was not much offended; and after a few ſacrifices to maiden delicacy, I conſented to become Mrs. Gilbert.

"Should it be objected to me, that I was too raſh and inconſiderate to enter into an alliance with a man I had ſo little knowledge of; let it de remembered that circumſtanced as I then was, I had but one alternative, which did not afford the moſt pleaſing proſpect upon reflection, Friendleſs and diſtreſſed, I gladly embraced an opportunity which offered at leaſt a probability of recompenſing me in ſome meaſure for what I had loſt Add to this, I had a more than common regard for Mr. Gilbert, which indeed was a ſtrong motive for my ſo readily acquieſcing with his deſire. — but to proceed — In a few days we were married, and Mr. Gilbert's love, ſo far from abating by poſſeſſion, was greatly increaſed. Joy and chearfulneſs once more, reſumed their ſway, and every thing began to glide again in its uſual channel.

"As Mr. Gilbert had never let me into his circumſtances. and I had through motives of falſe delicacy refrained from all enquiry, I was entirely ignorant as to his family and fortune: however, as we lived in an elegant manner (having ſoon after our marriage taken a large houſe) I was under no uneaſineſs on that ſubject.

"We had now been married ſix months, and I began to think Fortune grown weary of perſecuting me, when one morning a young woman genteelly dreſt knocked at the door, and aſked if Mr. Gilbert was within. I anſwered her in the negative; but at the ſame time, obſerving her appear ſomewhat fatigued with her walk, I entreated her to ſtep in and repoſe herſelf.

"After ſome little heſitation, ſhe accepted of my offer.—A certain air of melancholy ſurrounded her which

which made me take the more notice of her. Her face was truly oval; her eyes were black and ſparkling, but betrayed a languor paſt deſcription ſweet; her noſe was beautifully turned, approaching rather to the aquiline; her ſhape was one of the fineſt and eaſieſt that I have ever ſeen and her air at once graceful and majeſtic. Such was her perſon; nor could all her endeavours conceal an inward grief which evidently appeared to prey upon her ſpirits.

" She ſeemed to eye me with as much attention as I did her; and after ſome preparatory apology, ſhe enquired if my name was Gilbert. Upon my anſwering in the affirmative, ſhe burſt into tears. I intreated her to explain her extraodinary behaviour, and how my name could ſo viſibly affect her.—She inſtantly exclaimed, whilſt her heart ſeemed almoſt ready to burſt with ſome ſecret, " Madam, I am the " unhappieſt creature in the world. If you are Mrs. " Gilbert, what then am I!" I intreated her to compoſe herſelf, and endeavour to give me her Hiſtory; at the ſame time aſſuring her, if it lay in my power to ſerve her, ſhe might readily command me. Partly encouraged by my proteſtation, ſhe began her ſtory thus:

CHAP. IV.

Containing the Hiſtory of Miſs Jones. *Love and Heroics, Diſappointment, Deſpair, and a Piſtol. A Remonſtrance, and a Reconciliation.*

' MY name, Madam, is Jones: I am the only ' daughter of a Clergyman, to whoſe care ' Mr. Gilbert is indebted for his education.

' My father endeavoured to imbibe in me the ' ſtricteſt principles of Virtue: Duplicity and De- ' ceit he particularly cautioned me againſt: and oh! ' that I had never ſwerved from his precepts!—Oh!

'that I had more firmly adhered to thoſe excellent 'rules he laid down as the grounds of my conduct! 'I ſhould not now have had this poor, this diſtracted 'boſom torn with ſuch a conflict of hoſtile paſſions! 'I beg pardon, Madam, for thus anticipating the 'diſcovery of my indiſcretion.

'I was about the age of ſixteen, when Mr. Gilbert 'came to finiſh his ſtudies under my father's inſtruc-'tion. He had not been long with him, before he 'began to notice me in a particular manner. Young 'and unexperienced in the wiles of mankind, and 'totally unaccuſtomed to deceit, I very innocently 'believed his affections to be real. Fool that I was 'not to ſee the inſincerity of his profeſſions!

'My Father, who was pleaſed to ſee us ſo ami-'cable, encouraged our fondneſs; by which he, 'though very innocently, was inſtrumental in the 'completion of my preſent unhappineſs.

'Nothing very material happened till I had at-'tained the age of eighteen. We had made it a rule 'to celebrate every birth-day as a little feſtival. My 'poor old father was remarkably merry and chearful 'that day. Ah, little did he think what a bitter 'draught was preparing for him! Little did he 'imagine that he would have reaſon to curſe that 'day with bitter curſes!

'A few days after, I obſerved a ſettled gloom up-'on Mr. Gilbert's countenance, which ſeemed to 'predict ſomething extraordinary. As I was anxiouſ-'ly eager to know the cauſe, I naturally took the firſt 'opportunity to demand it of him. He immediately 'appeared ready to gratify my curioſity; and putting 'his hand into his pocket, drew from thence a letter, 'which he delivered to me with a ſigh, ſaying, "Yes, "Miſs Charlotte you ſhall be obeyed: read that let-"ter, and be convinced whether or not I have rea-"ſon to be afflicted!" —Without waiting for a re-

'ply

'ply he vaniſhed, and left me alone to admire his 'uncommon behaviour; which, indeed, ſo entirely 'engroſſed my ſenſes, that for ſome minutes I was 'incapable of opening the letter.

'My curioſity, however, at laſt gaining the aſcen-'dancy of every other conſideration, I opened it, and 'found it came from his father. As nearly as I can 'recollect, it was worded in this manner:

"Son WILLIAM,

"I am informed you are going to marry your Tu-"tor's daughter: -- the moment you commit ſo raſh "a ſtep, you are no longer my ſon. — I have ſaid "this much, that you may not plead ignorance of "my ſentiments:—however, if you have not played "the fool already, I ſhall in a few days put it out "of your power by ſending for you home.

"Your's as you behave,

GILBERT GILBERT."

"This letter filled me with inexpreſſible uneaſi-"neſs, which I found impoſſible to diſguiſe. In the "evening I ſaw Mr. Gilbert, who watched my "looks with the niceſt circumſpection, hoping to "read in them the ſentiments of my mind.

"Well, Miſs (ſaid he, the moment we were "alone,) what think you of the letter I gave you?" "I think (replied I,) that your father has acted "with a great ſhare of prudence; and if you would "likewiſe act as a dutiful ſon, you will make no "heſitation to obey him."

"He appeared viſibly chagrined at my anſwer. "And is this your advice, Miſs Charlotte!—Do "you think a heart that loves, that adores you as "mine does, can liſten to the cold admonitions of "Prudence?—No Madam; I ſhould have at leaſt "expected ſome conſolation from you. — But ſince "you are pleaſed to deny me it, I ſhall take your "advice, and obey you."

" Heaven is my witneſs (replied I,) with what " reluctance that advice was extorted from me!— " But can I agree to your ſacrificing all advantages " of being Sir Gilbert's heir, to the indulgence of " a fooliſh paſſion?" " I deſpiſe thoſe advantages " (exclaimed he;) could I only be certain of your " affection, I ſhould conſider myſelf as amply re- " compenſed."

' It would be folly, Madam, to deny the impreſ- ' ſion he made on me by theſe words; I had long ' loved him, tho' almoſt ignorant what that paſſion ' meant. I, however, deſired him not to think of ' it for the preſent, and left him diſtracted with a ' thouſand different paſſions.

' All night my imagination was perplexed with ' thinking of the fatal letter. Sleep I could not; ' and the agitation of my mind was ſuch, that in ' the morning I found myſelf exceedingly ill.

' My poor father, who doated upon me almoſt to ' diſtraction, neglected no means for my recovery. ' By his order I was attended by the moſt eminent ' of the Faculty, who pronounced my diſorder to be a ' high fever. In my delirium I was continually calling ' upon Mr. Gilbert, who was never abſent from ' my imagination. At my firſt interval of reaſon, I ' beheld him ſitting by my bed-ſide, and bathing ' my hand with his tears. This token of his affec- ' tion was more conducive towards eſtabliſhing my ' health, than the preſcriptions of the moſt exper- ' ienced Phyſicians.

' In a few days I was pronounced out of danger; ' and as I had youth and a ſtrong conſtitution on my ' ſide, in a ſhort time I was able to go about again ' as well as ever.

' Mr. Gilbert ſtill reminded me of his paſſion, ' which, indeed, I had little doubt of, both from ' my own want of artifice, and from that apparent

' ſolicitude

'solicitude for my welfare, which he evinced in my 'late illneſs.

"My dear Charlotte (ſaid he one day,) you "know how much my happineſs depends upon "you.—My father, according to the common "events of mortality, cannot live much longer.— "Suppoſe by a private marriage we put it out of "the power of Chance to deprive us of an union? "If you agree to this, I have a friend in Orders "who will be glad to be ſerviceable to me, and "whoſe honour and ſecrecy I have more than once "experienced."

'At firſt, Madam, I utterly refuſed my conſent 'to ſuch a clandeſtine union.—I repreſented to him, 'how doubly offended Sir Gilbert would be, ſhould 'he come to the knowledge of ſuch an event; and 'how impoſſible it would be to keep him long from 'the knowledge of it.—I expoſtulated with him on 'the ſin of diſobedience; and finally, I painted to 'him in the ſtrongeſt light I was capable, how 'truly unhappy our reſpective parents would be, 'ſhould we engage in an affair of ſuch moment 'without their concurrence.

'I need not remind you, Madam, how very 'eaſily we are prevailed on to commit the thing 'we ſhould not, when our inclination in the leaſt 'rebels. Suffice it to ſay, that by his perſuaſion I 'was at length induced to agree to a marriage, with-'out any perſon, except the Gentleman who was 'abſolutely neceſſary to perform the ſervice, being 'made privy to it.

'I know not, Madam, how it was, but my mind 'began to tell me, all was not right. My conſcience 'upbraided me for impoſing upon my poor father; 'and when I looked in his face, I beheld him as a 'criminal would his accuſer. I did little elſe but cry 'all that day; nor could Mr. Gilbert's aſſiduities 'extort one ſmile from me.

'We had now been married upwards of six 'months, when Mr. Gilbert received orders from 'his father to repair to London. In a few days he 'prepared for his journey.

'The time for his departure being come, he 'took his leave of me with the moſt diſſembled ten- 'derneſs; telling me, he would take the earlieſt op- 'portunity to diſcloſe the ſecret of our marriage to 'his father at all events. This I in the ſtrongeſt 'manner enjoined him to do, as I was conſiderably 'advanced in my pregnancy.

'The moment he departed, I reſigned myſelf to 'grief. My father, who was ignorant how nearly 'his abſence affected me, very naturally attributed 'my ſorrow to the loſs of an old acquaintance. I 'ſuffered him to continue in that belief, and did all 'I could to reconcile myſelf to my ſufferings.

'Three weeks paſſed on without my hearing any 'thing from Mr. Gilbert. You may eaſily imagine 'how tedious the moments appeared to one ſo anxi- 'ouſly fond of him as I was. However, on the fourth, 'I received a letter from him full of the moſt ardent 'vows, but not a word was mentioned concerning 'our marriage. This (though ſomewhat diſappoint- 'ed) I attributed to his caution, and immediately 'anſwered his letter, wherein I particularly requeſted 'him to declare our marriage, as my pregnancy be- 'came every day more and more viſible.

'Previous to Mr. Gilbert's departure, we had 'agreed upon a plan for his writing to me; which 'was, to direct his letters under cover to a friend, 'by whoſe care I got poſſeſſion of them without 'running any hazard of detection from my father.

'About nine or ten days after I had anſwered 'Mr. Gilbert's, I received a letter by the poſt, in 'a hand I was totally unacquainted with.—It was 'nearly as follows:

"Madam, "A FEW

" A FEW days ago I received a letter, in the ab-
" ſence of my ſon, directed to him, in a female
" hand, which, as I was ignorant of any private con-
" nection he had with the Ladies, I took the free-
" dom of a father to open. The letter, I am inform-
" ed, was written by you, and really contains a de-
" tail of circumſtances, together with ſome expreſ-
" ſions ſo very extraordinary, that I ſhall be glad to
" have them cleared up. I have taken Will to taſk,
" who denies any knowledge of your meaning or in-
" tention; and really, if you are in jeſt, I muſt de-
" ſire you not to repeat ſuch jokes any more, as my
" ſon is upon the eve of marriage with a lady of
" fortune. If Will has been villain enough to ſe-
" duce your affections by a promiſe of marrige, I
" ſhall rate him ſeverely about it: but if, on the
" contrary, your own indiſcretion has alone been
" inſtrumental towards rendering you unhappy, you
" have no one to blame but yourſelf.

" I have the honour to be, Madam,
Your humble ſervant,
" GILBERT GILBERT."

P. S. " I have ſent a few lines to your father, as
" I would have Will's conduct unexceptionable."

' I had ſcarcely finiſhed peruſing the letter, when
' my father appeared before me with a countenance
' expreſſive of the higheſt indignation. The moment
' his eyes glanced with mine, I fainted away. In an
' inſtant his tenderneſs returned; and inſtead of up-
' braiding me, all his endeavours were exerted to
' effect my recovery.

' I was immediately conveyed to bed, where the
' greateſt care was taken of me; nor was any atten-
' tion omitted which offered a probability of allevi-
' ating my preſent indiſpoſition. The conflict of
' mind I underwent brought on my pains of travail;
' and I was delivered of a child, who, happily for it,
' died a few hours after its birth.

'The villainy of Gilbert being ever uppermoſt 'in my thoughts, created ſuch diſagreeable ſenſati- 'ons, that my recovery was for a long time doubt- 'ful. However, the thoughts of finding him, and 'obliging him to do me juſtice, at laſt diverted me 'from my deſpair; and I began to be ſomewhat 'more eaſy in my mind.

'I was ſurpriſed, that during my illneſs I had 'never received any viſit from my father; and in- 'deed I was fearful of an enquiry, as thoſe who at- 'tended me ſeemed rather ſtudiouſly to avoid men- 'tioning his name. I was, however, at laſt inform- 'ed, that he was taken exceedingly ill ſoon after my 'delivery, inſomuch that his life was deſpaired of; 'but that he was then in a fair way of recovery.

'O, Madam! (continued ſhe,) did you but know 'the pains, the agonizing pains my ſoul endured at 'this intelligence, I am certain you would, you muſt 'have pitied me! To reflect on a father who loved 'me with the warmeſt affection; to reflect that he 'was unhappy and miſerable, thro' the conſummate 'villainy of a perſon whom he had always treated 'with paternal kindneſs; and myſelf, thro' my own 'indiſcretion, inſtrumental in adding to his afflicti- 'on;—my ſoul even to this moment ſhudders at 'the retroſpect!

'The firſt thing I attempted upon my recovery, 'was to endeavour at diſcovering ſome evidence by 'which I might make him acknowledge me as his 'wife. This, indeed, upon trial, was not ſo eaſy to 'accompliſh, as my hopes had fondly painted it; he 'having taken the greateſt care and circumſpection 'imaginable not to make uſe of any expreſſion or 'term whatever, by which the juſtice of my claim 'might be aſcertained, or whereby I could reap any 'poſſible advantage: and to render me completely 'miſerable, I very accidentally, during my ſearch,

'met

'met with the rough ſketch of a letter, which at 'once blaſted my hopes, and ſhewed me what a 'wretch I truly was completely rendered ſo by the 'villainy of a man whom I loved too well.

'The letter alluded to was as follows:

"Dear NED,

"TEN thouſand thanks for thy timely and friend-"ly aſſiſtance! I think thou wouldſt be an ornament "to the Church; the Gown becomes thee ſo well: "'Faith, 'tis an infinite pity thy friends had not de-"ſign'd thee for it. As for Charlotte, ſhe, innocent "lamb, had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of the Wolf in "ſheep's cloathing.—We live very happily together, "which ſhews how uſeleſs ceremonies in love are! "Shall I confeſs, that I almoſt repent of having de-"ceived her? Her beauty and ſimplicity certainly "deſerved a better return. But I forgot to whom I "am writing; and ſhall therefore conclude with an "aſſurance, that if I can recompenſe thee by a "ſimilar piece of friendſhip, I am heartily at thy "ſervice.

"WILLIAM GILBERT."

'The moment I had peruſed this diabolical epiſtle, 'my deſperate ſituation ſtared me in the face—ten 'thouſand horrid ideas crouded in my brain—I for-'got my ſex, and was reſolved upon revenge.

'I imparted my intention to no one; but, dreſſing 'myſelf in a ſuit of cloaths that belonged to my 'brother (who was abroad with his regiment,) 'which exactly fitted me, I immediately ſet out for 'London, with a fixed determination of demanding 'juſtice from the man who had ſo barbarouſly and 'diſhonourably treated me.

'Upon my arrival in the Metropolis, I enquired 'for Mr. Gilbert, and was informed he was then at 'the **** Tavern, to which I repaired; and call-'ing for a room, deſired a waiter to inform him that

'a Gentleman would be glad to ſpeak with him 'upon particular and urgent buſineſs.

'I had previouſly provided myſelf with piſtols; 'and, notwithſtanding the natural delicacy of my 'conſtitution, my wrongs rendered me deaf to all 'ſenſations of pity, armed me with ten-fold fury, 'and I was reſolutely bent to effect his deſtruction.

'In a few minutes Mr. Gilbert made his appear-'ance. The moment I ſaw him, in a frantic voice 'I exclaimed, *Villain, receive thy death!*" at the 'ſame time diſcharging one of the piſtols at him, 'the ball of which, by my perturbation of mind, 'flew infinitely wide of the deſtined mark. In ſpite 'of my diſguiſe he inſtantly knew me, and ruſhing 'in upon me, diſarmed me. After ſurveying me 'ſome moments in ſilence, with the moſt contemptu-'ous ſneer he exclaimed, "*What, in Heroics, 'Madam!*" and turning round, was preparing to 'leave me.

'The noiſe of the piſtol having by this time al-'armed the houſe, we were quickly ſurrounded by 'the domeſtics, who inquiring into the cauſe, he in-'formed them I was mad; and my unguarded ex-'preſſions leading to a diſcovery of my ſex, they 'were eaſily perſuaded into the truth of his relation.

'Overcome with ſhame and diſappointment, I 'fainted away. What paſſed during this interval I 'know not; but upon regaining my ſenſes, I found 'myſelf in a ſtrange bed, attended by people whoſe 'faces I had never ſeen before. To add to my ſur-'prize, in leſs than an hour I was aſtoniſhed by a 'viſit from Mr. Gilbert. With well-diſſembled ten-'derneſs he approached me; and after expoſtulating 'with me upon my raſh behaviour, proceeded to 'vindicate every part of his conduct towards me. 'He aſſured me his love was as violent as ever; 'that, indeed, in obedience to the commands of his

'Father,

'Father, he had addreſſed a Lady, but that he 'neither had, nor ever would marry her; that he 'conſidered his engagement to me in too ſerious a 'light to ſport with; and that he was doubly 'bound to ſupport that engagement both by his 'honour and love.

'On hearing ſo bare-faced a proſtitution of the 'word Honour, I could contain my reſentment no 'longer; but preſenting him with the letter which 'had given me ſo much uneaſineſs, I deſired him to 'peruſe it.

'Scarce had he opened it, but I perceived his "coward cheek grow pale."— I ſaw every mark 'of guilt, every mark of confuſion!

'Without waiting to hear him offer any thing in 'his vindication, I addreſſed him as follows:

"It was not, Sir, becauſe I doubted of your baſe- "neſs that I preſented you with that letter; it was "not that I wanted proof of your guilt.—No, Sir, "I was aſſured of your cowardly treachery; I have "been long convinced of your diſingenuous behavi- "our. It was to preſerve you from the pitiful ſub- "terfuge of having recourſe to falſhood to ſupport "your guilt; it was to prevent you from adding a "lye to your other crimes, that I deſired you to read "that epiſtle. Theſe, and theſe only, were the mo- "tives of my conduct."

'Well may you bluſh, Mr. Gilbert!—Well may 'you ſtand amazed and confuſed at this unjuſtifia- 'ble evidence of your guilt! and well may you 'triumph over the credulity of a weak woman, whoſe 'only fault was that of loving you too well. But 'know, Sir, the injured have a Friend, who will 'one day do juſtice to their cauſe, and before whoſe 'tribunal your arts will prove of ſmall avail."

'He appeared to be ſomewhat affected by what I 'ſaid; and as he ſaw how little it would tend towards

'his

'his vindication to perſiſt in an affirmation of his 'innocence, he acknowledged there was but too 'much juſtice on the ſide of my complaint; but at 'the ſame time endeavoured to apologize for his 'criminality, by repreſenting the neceſſity he was 'under of not marrying during the life of his father 'without his concurrence. To this he added, the 'violence of his love; the improbability of obtain-'ing his father's conſent; and finally declared, he 'conſidered himſelf as truly and lawfully my huſband, 'as tho' our nuptial benediction had been pronounced 'by a regular Son of the Church.

'It would be in vain, Madam, to deny, that in 'ſpite of his baſeneſs I ſtill loved him. Blinded and 'infatuated by that paſſion, I belived the truth of 'his aſſertions, and was even the firſt to ſollicit a 'reconciliation. I was now no longer the paſſionate 'creature panting for revenge, but was again the 'fond, the credulous woman; again in love, and 'again doomed to experience freſh miſery.

CHAP. V.

In which Miſs Jones's *Story is concluded. A Lord may be a Diſhoneſt Man. Melancholy—and a Mad-houſe. An Eſcape; and more bad News.*

'I HAD now lived five weeks with Mr. Gilbert '(nor in all this time did I once acquaint my fa-'ther with my ſituation,) when he aſked me one 'morning, if I had any objection to accompany 'him a few miles into the country, upon a viſit to 'an acquaintance, Lord Monſon. I very readily 'joined with the propoſal; and a poſt chaiſe being 'ordered, in a few hours we were conveyed to his 'Lordſhip's ſeat.

'Lord Monſon, though in the decline of life, is 'ſtill

'ſtill a ſlave to his paſſions, and of the moſt aband-
'oned principles; equally devoid of honour and
'humanity. A few days intimacy with him gave
'me an opportunity of acquiring a thorough know-
'ledge of his character; in which I found nothing
'to admire, but every thing to fear from his un-
'bridled licentiouſneſs and brutality.

'I had not been under his roof twenty-four hours,
'before his freedom of diſcourſe gave ſome alarm
'to my delicacy: however, as my recluſe way of
'life while under the eye of my father, had left me
'totally unacquainted with the manners of the
'world, I attributed the ſtrangeneſs of his addreſs
'rather to my own ignorance of life, than to his
'Lordſhip's want of decorum.

'Mr. Gilbert going out one morning to amuſe
'himſelf with his gun, Lord Monſon availed him-
'ſelf with of the opportunity unceremoniouſly to
'intrude into my bed-chamber. Surpriſed as I was,
'I ſtill retained preſence of mind ſufficient to de-
'mand the reaſon of ſo untimely a viſit. "Love,
"my Angel"!" (replied the monſter) and inſtantly
'proceeded to ſuch liberties as left me not the leaſt
'room to doubt the baſeneſs of his intentions.
"Leave me, my Lord, I beſeech you (exclaimed
"I, terrified at his violence,) nor aim at violating
"the ſacred laws of Honour and Hoſpitality.—Con-
"ſider, my Lord, I am your gueſt, and am there-
"fore doubly intitled to your Lordſhip's protection.
"Or, if deaf to the calls of Honour, yet pay ſome
"attention to thoſe of Friendſhip. Does your Lord-
"ſhip rightly conſider the wrong you are intending
"your friend—my huſband?"

"Your huſband! (replied he, with a ſneer)—I
"ſuppoſe, Madam, you mean Mr. Gilbert: but to
"let you into the ſecret, know that all my proceed-
"ings have already received the ſanction of his con-
"currence." "You

"You amaze me, my Lord! (cried I) and could "my husband be so very a villain?"

"It is matter of very great indifference to me "(answered his Lordship,) whether Mr. Gilbert be "your husband or not; but his assuring me to the "contrary, together with a firm belief that every "fine woman has an undeniable claim to universal "adoration, will prove my exculpation; nay, "will vindicate me, should I be compelled to "proceed to any extremity. Besides (added he,) "a man who could be prevailed upon so easily to "relinquish so much beauty, has, in my opinion, "forfeited every pretension to regard, and deserves "to be treated with every dishonour he has been so "anxious to bring upon himself."

'As I found he was fully bent upon accomplishing 'his desires, I proceeded to make all the resistance 'I could. My outcries alarmed some of the servants, 'who, accustomed as they were to their master's 'brutality, nevertheless by their appearance hindered 'him from putting his detestable designs into exe-'cution for the present; and he left me with an 'open declaration of effecting his wicked purpose 'the first opportunity.

'Notwithstanding I was so firmly convinced of 'Mr. Gilbert's villainy, I was still determined not 'to take the least notice of Lord Monson's behavi-'our, nor of the secret he had communicated to me, 'as I well knew I was in both their power, and 'ignorant how far they might exert the authority 'they possessed over me.

'When Mr. Gilbert, therefore, returned, I re-'ceived him with a countenance as if nothing ex-'traordinary had happened; though I could per-'ceive, by the singularity of his behaviour, a con-'sciousness of having merited a quite different re-'ception.

'Supper being over, we soon after retired to our

'apartment

'apartment without my expreſſing any thing, by 'word or action, whereby he could poſſibly gueſs at 'my uneaſineſs. My thoughts kept me awake dur-'ing the greateſt part of the night; and I perceived 'Mr. Gilbert had as little inclination to ſleep as 'myſelf: however, towards the approach of morn-'ing I fell into a ſound ſleep, which laſted without 'intermiſſion till near ten o'clock. But what was 'my ſurprize, upon waking, to find myſelf faſt lock-'ed in the arms of Lord Monſon!—I ſtruggled, 'I cried, I did all it was poſſible for a woman 'to do in my caſe; but, alas! my ſtrength failed 'me!—I fainted away—and—and—the monſter 'triumphed!'

"Here ſhe was interrupted by a flood of tears, which having partly reſtored her to eaſe, ſhe proceed-ed as follows:

'O, Madam! words are unequal to the deſcrip-'tion of my feelings, upon recovering my ſenſes. I 'execrated the brutal authors of my miſery—I tore 'my hair—offered violence to my perſon—my rea-'ſon ſtaggered—and in a few days I remained in a 'lethargic ſtate of inſenſibility; whilſt thoſe ſtains 'to Humanity, who had reduced me to that pitiable 'condition, laughed at my ſufferings; and regard-'leſs of my wrongs, lived to triumph over every 'tye of honour, over every attribute of manhood 'and generoſity!'

'I know not how long I remained after this 'tranſaction under the inhoſpitable roof of Lord 'Monſon; ſuffice it to ſay, that during the time I 'did remain there, I was ſubject to every caprice 'and whim which luſt and a depraved imagination 'could ſuggeſt.

'One morning, without any preparatory intima-'tion, I was forced into a poſt-chaiſe, which con-'veyed me to a genteel houſe, into which I was

'compelled

'compelled to enter. The perſon who accompanied 'me, after diſcourſing with the people of the houſe, 'departed and left me. I ſoon found out that this 'was a private receptacle for thoſe unfortunate per-'ſons whoſe reaſon was impaired; and notwith-'ſtanding this was an additional proof of the bar-'barity of Mr. Gilbert, I was ſo compleatly miſer-'able, as to be then totally indifferent with regard 'to any ſituation.

'Two years I lived in this manner, treated with 'all that ſeverity ſo univerſally practiſed in ſuch 'places. Indeed I began to fear the term of my 'impriſonment would end only with my life: 'however, in this I was happily deceived.

'A young woman whoſe employment it was to 'attend upon the unhappy objects who were con-'fined there, appeared to ſhew many ſigns of par-'tiality in my favour, and evidently treated me with 'a degree of tenderneſs that could ſcarcely be ex-'pected from a perſon who had been ſo long habi-'tuated to ſcenes which appeared calculated to ren-'der all the tender affections callous. Ignorant as I 'was of the motive which induced her to behave 'with ſo viſible a partiality, I was, nevertheleſs, 'ever greatefully ready to acknowledge it, and to 'ſolicit a continuance of her friendſhip and eſteem. 'This I the more readily did, from a perſuaſion 'that ſhe poſſeſſed a through ſenſibility of heart, 'and a mind formed to ſympathize with the af-'flicted.

'She came into my apartment one day, and af-'ter expreſſing her ſorrow for my confinement, de-'ſired I would favour her with a relation of my 'Hiſtory. I very readily complied with her requeſt, 'at which ſhe ſeemed much affected; and in return 'gave the following account of herſelf

"That ſhe had been married young to a Merchant

"in

" in the City, who wedded her ſolely on account " of her fortune, which was conſiderable; that he " was no ſooner poſſeſſed of it, than he contrived " to get her confined in the houſe we were then in; " that during five years ſhe was nearly upon the " ſame terms as I was; but that after that period, " her huſband neglecting to pay the demand of the " maſter of the houſe, ſhe was conſtrained to attend " upon her fellow-priſoners as a ſervant; and that " ſhe agreed to this the more readily, as ſhe there- " by enjoyed a degree of liberty permitted to no " other patient."

'I intreated her to invent ſome method by 'which I might effect my eſcape. This ſhe pro- 'miſed to do, upon condition I conſented to accept 'her as a companion of my flight.

'You need not doubt, Madam, (continued ſhe) 'but to this propoſal I gladly agreed; and the 'more ſo, as the ſimilarity in our misfortunes ren- 'dered her doubly deſerving my friendſhip. All 'things being therefore provided, one evening ſhe 'let me out unperceived by any one; and taking the 'direct road to my father's houſe, which lay only 'eleven miles diſtant, we commenced our journey 'with joyful hearts.

'I thought it not adviſeable to go immediately 'to my father, leaſt the joy of ſeeing me ſhould be 'productive of ſome bad effect. I therefore called 'at an Inn nearly oppoſite; and tho' it was ſcarcely 'five o'clock, yet as we had been walking all night 'the earlineſs of the hour hindered us not from ſeek- 'ing ſome refreſhment.

'As I was dreſſed in the habit of the houſe from 'whence we had eſcaped, it was impoſſible for any 'one to know me; I therefore began to make ſome 'enquiries about the neighbourhood; ſuch as, who 'were the principal people of the village, and the 'like:

'like: to all which queſtions I received anſwers, with-
'out any diſcovery of who I was, or what was my
'motive for aſking. I next enquired, what was the
'name of their Vicar, and was ſurpriſed to hear a
'ſtrange name: but it immediately occurred to me
'that, perhaps, my father had provided himſelf
'with a Curate, which had cauſed the miſtake. I
'therefore replied (willing to be ſatisfied), That I
'thought Mr. Jones had been in poſſeſſion of the
'living. "Ah, lack-a-day! (anſwered the good
"woman) poor Mr. Jones had a bad daughter, who
"ran away, no one knows where; and her indiſcre-
"tion had ſuch an effect upon her father, that it
"ſhortly after broke his heart. I believe there was
"not a dry eye in the pariſh when he was buried.
"Poor Gentleman! he requeſted that his daugh-
"ter's picture might be buried with him. Ah!
"'tis a ſad thing to have undutiful children."

'Think, think, Madam, what I ſuffered after re-
'ceiving this inteligence! I was like one diſtracted;
'and my behaviour ſoon led to a diſcovery of my
'real character; which the Hoſteſs had no ſooner
'poſſeſſed herſelf of, than ſhe entered into ſome o-
'ther particulars which ſtill more affected me. She
'informed me, that the morning on which, full of
'my raſh ſcheme, I had ſet out for London, my
'father had made ſtrict enquiry after me
'all over the neighbourhood: That hearing no
'tidings of me there, he proceeded to London in
'queſt of me; where being diſappointed in his en-
'deavours to learn what was become of me, with
'dejected ſpirits he returned back, where he reſign-
'ed himſelf up to the blackeſt deſpair: That, ſome
'little time after this, his melancholy ſo encreaſed,
'that he appeared inſenſible to every thing, refuſed
'his food, and did nothing for whole days but cry,
'and call upon my name. She likewiſe informed

'me,

'me, that he had transferred all he poſſeſſed into the 'hands of Guardians, to be equally divided between 'my brother and myſelf, whenever I ſhould appear 'to claim it; and finally, That they had made all 'poſſible enquiry after my brother, but could gain 'no intelligence of him; though what appeared to 'them the moſt probable conjecture was, that he 'was made priſoner; he being miſſed immediately 'after an engagement with the enemy, in which 'he had particularly diſtinguiſhed himſelf.

'I know not how it was, but my eyes then re-'fuſed to obey the felings of my heart, and I re-'maind in a ſtate of inſenſibility, incapable of ſhed-'ding a tear: I, however, requeſted her to ſhew 'me the tomb which incloſed the remains of my 'dear Parent; a ſight of which I imagined would 'awaken me from my lethargy, and call forth the 'humid token of my filial reſpect.

'By the ſtedfaſt manner in which I made known 'my requeſt, ſhe was evidently fearful that I had 'adopted ſome raſh reſolution, and therefore inſiſted 'upon accompanying me. This I readily permitted 'her to do, and we all three ſet out together. Hav-'ing reached the ſpot enriched with the bones of 'my father, I found the effect much the ſame I had 'ſurmiſed; and my tears voluntarily paid the tribute 'due to Duty and Affection. Having a few minutes 'indulged myſelf in this "*dignity of grief*," I 'found myſelf conſiderably more at eaſe, my ſpirits 'more elevated; and my whole ſoul enlarged; and 'I returned to the Inn in a far different mood from 'that in which I ſet out.

'Having ſomewhat refreſhed myſelf, I repaired 'to the houſe of the Gentleman whom my father 'had nominated as executor to his laſt will, who 'gave me a cordial reception, and to whom I relat-'ed all that had befallen me.—He joined in execrat-'ing that villain Gilbert—Pardon me, Madam con-

'(continued ſhe,) for making uſe of that expreſſion; 'the injured have the privilege to complain—and 'adviſed me to ſeek redreſs.

'Actuated by the hope of prevailing upon him 'yet to do me juſtice, I yeſterday left my friends, and 'came here only to be a melancholy evidence of the 'impoſſibility of my ever finding relief from my 'troubles on this ſide the grave.'

"Here ſhe concluded her Story, and left me equally aſtoniſhed and aſhamed at the conduct of a man, who could ſo inhumanly treat a young creature, who, it was apparent from every circumſtance, in ſpite of his ill-uſage, ſtill continued to love him.

"I enquired by what means ſhe diſcovered the preſent reſidence of Mr. Gilbert; when ſhe informed me, that ſhe learned it by enquiring at the Tavern where ſhe ſaw him at the time ſhe diſcharged the piſtol at him.

"As there appeared no doubt as to the criminality of Mr. Gilbert, I did every thing in my power to reconcile this unfortunate young creature to her misfortunes; but as it was evident to me, how little her appearance before him would tend to heal her wrongs, I adviſed her to give up all thoughts of ſeeing him, and return home in expectation of what Time and Fortune might execute in her favour.

"She very readily followed my advice, and took her leave, whilſt the tears ſtood quivering in her eye, beſeeching me to be doubly cautious againſt the baſe arts of a man, who had already evinced how great a ſtranger he was to every attribute of honour."

Mrs. Gilbert was going to proceed, when Mr. Lloyd bogged her to defer the remainder of her Narrative till another opportunity, as it was time for him to wait on the Juſtice, in order to make enquiry reſpecting Mr. Rattle and the Manager. Our Heroine immediately made a pauſe; and here the the Reader may, if he chooſes, make a pauſe alſo.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI

Deſcription of a remarkable Garden: And a Diſcourſe upon the Folly of Deſpair; which the Critic will think very dull, and the Man of Faſhion very unſeaſonable.

WHILST Mr. Lloyd was gone to execute the enquiry mentioned at the concluſion of the laſt Chapter, Mrs. Gilbert, accompanied by Mr. Gwynn the Houſekeeper, indulged herſelf with taking a walk in the garden, the laying out of which evinced no leſs a claim to ſingularity, than did the manſion to which it belonged. A group of worm-eaten figures, whoſe only value was centered in the antiquity they manifeſted, and whoſe mutilation ſerved no leſs as an object for reflection, than as an evidence of the uncommon taſte of their maſter, preſented an undeniable proof of the power of Time. In one place ſtood elevated an Hercules without his club, in another, an Helen bereft of her noſe; next to her, a Cupid with his bow broke in twain, near whom appeared a headleſs Mercury, with only one leg. A Philoſopher might have found here ample room to indulge his love for meditation; and here a Virtuoſo might have lamented the univerſal and ſhocking depravation of Taſte; whilſt a man of real judgment deviating from both, might have juſtly found employment in condemning alike the idle reveries of the one, and the uſeleſs pedantry of the other, which could ſo readily direct their attention to a vain regard for trifles.

Hewever, as Mrs Gilbert was unfortunately neither a Philoſopher nor a Virtuoſo, ſhe paid but little attention to thoſe venerable perſonages: In fact, ſhe had employment ſufficient in meditating upon her

her own misfortnnes. She found herſelf amongſt ſtrangers, in a place ſhe was totally unacquainted with; forlorn and deſtitute, without the conſolation of having any one to direct her. Should ſhe return to Cardiff, an immediate diſperſion of the remainder part of the Company muſt be the natural and unavoidable conſequence of the loſs of the Manager and his Friend, without whoſe aſſiſtance it was impoſſible to proceed in their plan of itinerancy.

The conſideration of theſe circumſtances created in her mind many very diſagreeable ſenſations; nor could that animated flow of ſpirits which ſhe naturally poſſeſſed, bear her up ſufficiently againſt the tide of diſtreſs that apparently threatened to overwhelm her. Mrs. Gwynn, the humanity of whoſe diſpoſition was ſcarcely to be equalled, and who perceived to what a melancholy ſtate theſe thoughts had reduced her, ſtrove all in her power to divert her attention from reflections ſo diſagreeable: But all in vain! Think of it ſhe muſt, although ſhe endeavoured to hide her uneaſineſs, as much as ſhe poſſibly could from the obſervance of every one.

If it ſhould be interogated, why Mrs. Gilbert ſhould be now more ſenſible of her diſtreſſed ſituation, than in the morning previous to her commencing the recital of her Hiſtory, or than the preceding night, let it be remembered, that ſhe was in general bleſſed with a ſhare of ſpirits, the vivacity of which was ſuperior to the common misfortunes of life; that enured as ſhe was to diſappointment, her natural gaiety of heart ſo far prevailed over every conſideration of what ſhe herſelf was to ſuffer, that, ſorry as ſhe was for the fate of her companions, ſhe was, nevertheleſs, enabled to endure the ſtroke which deprived her of them with reſolution, and ſhe even ſaw herſelf left deſtitute without a murmur. But when by the deſire of Mr. Lloyd ſhe entered into a relation

a relation of her adventures, ſhe found the taſk too weighty to ſupport, without effecting a diminution of thoſe ſpirits which had hitherto ſupported her equally againſt the attacks of preſent, and the dread of future diſtreſs

As ſhe found, during the ſhort intervals which her misfortunes allowed her, and which even the moſt wretched are occaſionally bleſſed with, certain cravings of curioſity which longed to be ſatisfied in regard to ſome particulars reſpecting Mr. Lloyd, ſhe made her deſire known to Mrs. Gwynn, who appeared readily diſpoſed to gratify her; and in conſequence thereof informed her, that Mr. Lloyd was a Gentleman of an ancient family, who with an only ſiſter were the ſole fruit of their parents, marriage; that before he had attained his fourteenth year, he had the misfortune to loſe both his parents; ſoon after which his ſiſter, who was four years older than himſelf, unaccountably eloped from her Guardian, and had never ſince been heared of; and that Mr. Lloyd, who was exceedingly fond of her, was ſo ſenſibly afflicted by her loſs, that he had determined upon living a ſingle life; by which reſolution he had hitherto firmly abided.

Soon after this converſation with Mrs. Gwynn, Mr. Lloyd made his appearance. The moment Mrs. Gilbert ſaw him, with a tremulous accent ſhe enquired what intelligence he had brought her. He informed her, that there was too much reaſon to fear that both Mr. Rattle and the Manager were really guilty of the crime laid to their charge, as they were detained upon the poſitive evidence of two Gentlemen whom they had robbed three weeks before. Mrs. Gilbert ſtill urged the probability of their being miſtaken, nor would her charity for the unfortunate men permit her to indulge the moſt diſtant thought which might tend to conſider them as criminal:

criminal: on the contrary, ſhe related many inſtances of the identity of a perſon being ſworn to, who, nevertheleſs, had afterwards been able to prove a clear *alibi*.

Dinner being upon the table, Mr. Lloyd was was prevented from ſaying any more at preſent upon ſo diſagreeable a ſubject; but conducting her into the parlour, begged her to aſſiſt in doing honour to an entertainment, where he hoped a hearty welcome would ſufficiently atone for the want of a more elegant preparation. During the time of dinner (which was conducted with the ſtricteſt decorum), Mr. Lloyd endeavoured to prevail upon his gueſt to forget for a moment her misfortunes. To enable him the better to effect ſo laudable a purpoſe, he called in the aſſiſtance of the Curate, who luckily had juſt then made his appearance, no leſs agreeably than unexpected. Mr. Lloyd was well aſſured that that worthy Divine would gladly embrace an opportunity which afforded him the probable means of being any ways inſtrumental towards the completion of ſo commendable a taſk; he therefore made no ſcruple to give him ſome lights into Mrs. Gilbert's hiſtory, as alſo of attempting to account for that gloomineſs which juſt then ſeemed to overcloud her.

The Curate, who had attentively liſtened to what Mr. Lloyd had imparted to him, and whoſe philoſophy was founded alone upon the ſhallow foundation of *Theory*, proceeded to caution her againſt the ſin of giving way to the attacks of Deſpair, which he aſſerted was equally weak and wicked.

"Diſappointment, Madam (ſaid he,) is ſo cloſely "blended with the frailty of our natures, that to be "depreſſed at a circumſtance of which every rati-"onal Being ſhould live in continual expectation, "is both fooliſh and profane. Were we permitted "the unlimited gratification of every deſire which "caprice or a warm imagination might think requiſite

"towards

" towards rendering our domeſtic happineſs per-
" manent what miſerable creatures ſhould we be!
" Naturally of a fickle, wavering diſpoſition, even
" ſupreme happineſs itſelf, could the poverty of our
" natures enjoy it, would ſoon be transformed into
" miſery! Mankind are too often the authors of
" their own unhappineſs. Diſcontented with the
" humble ſtation in which the Deity for ſome wiſe
" and ſalutary purpoſe has thought proper to place
" them, they moſt daringly arraign the juſtice of
" his Providence, and attribute to themſelves merits
" deduced alone from ingratitude and impiety. A
" perſon of this ſort is ever unhappy. A perpetual
" melancholy ſurrounds him. The gloomineſs of his
" diſpoſition is ſuch, as to make him behold the
" common miſchances to which every ſtation of life
" is ſubject, as ſo many evils combinded alone for
" the deſtruction of an individual. The proſperity
" his neighbours he contemplates with uneaſineſs.
" Envious, moroſe, and diſcontented, his ſpleen diſ-
" colours every thing. As his years increaſe, the
" peeviſhneſs of his diſpoſition grows more apparent;
" and as he lived miſerable, he dies unlamented by
" his friends, a melancholy proof of the fatality
" which attends Deſpair.

" On the contrary, thoſe whoſe wiſer conduct is
" regulated by the dictates of Reaſon and Religion,
" will conſider Affliction only as meant to call their
" attention from the nugatory purſuits of this life to
" the contemplation of a future; to rouſe them from
" that carnal ſecurity into which all mankind are
" too apt to fall; and to remind them, that the ne-
" ver-ſleeping eye of Omnipotence is ever a ſpecta-
" tor of their actions. They will encounter misfor-
" tune with that fortitude and reſolution which
" Wiſdom alone can beſtow. Patiently enduring the
" calamities attendant on mortality, they will bear
" adverſity without a ſigh, and pain without a tear.

"Should Providence unexpectedly ſnatch from them "their neareſt and deareſt friend, ſo far from im- "piouſly murmuring at the ſtroke, they will rather "(conſcious of the wiſdom and mercy of the Deity) "ſit down and praiſe him for having taken him out "of a life of ſorrow and pain to be partaker of an "eternal Sabbath."

The Curate had proceeded thus far with his remarks, when he was unfortunately interrupted by the entrance of a neighbour, who notified to him that his wife had juſt fell down in an apoplectic fit, and that they were alarmed with a fear of her immediate diſſolution.

A ſhock of an earthquake would have proved trifling, to what the poor Curate experienced at this intelligence. He was ſo ſurpriſed that he knew not how to behave, and the ſtate of his mind was evident to every perſon preſent. Mrs. Gilbert reminded him of the *folly of murmuring againſt the diſpenſations of Providence*; recommended him to ſummon to his aſſiſtance the powers of *Fortitude*; and, in fine, retailed back to him his own arguments. I would not do.—The Curate tenderly loved his wife.

CHAP. VII.

The Difference between Theory and Practice in Philoſophy defined. Mrs. Gilbert's *Story continued. A Letter, and an Elopement. More Misfortunes.*

PHILOSOPHY is ſo far from being confined to theory, that unleſs a man unites a tolerable ſhare of practice to his other acquiſitions, not an acquaintance with every Moral of *Seneca* or *Epictetus* will exculpate him from the charge of pedantry. Like Phyſic, Philoſophy has many pretenders, and all mankind in general ſeem ambitious of diſplaying the

the ſuperiority of their knowledge in both thoſe ſciences. Does your head ach? Not an individual to whom you may chuſe to communicate your caſe, but will preſcribe you an infallible ſpecific. Are you grieved for the death of a tender parent, a faithful wife, or a dutiful child? Every one who penetrates into your ſorrow, will remind you of the folly of mourning for thoſe who are inſenſible of your lamentation; and with a wonderful ſhare of ſagacity will endeavour to conſole you by the trite obſervation, that "*all who live muſt die:*" yet, perhaps, theſe very comforters are as ready to run into the folly they have been declaiming againſt, and that upon the moſt trifling occaſion, as the perſon the have troubled with their unneceſſary advice.

To condole with a perſon in trouble, is both humane and friendly. It denotes the ſincerity of your friendſhip, and the benevolence of your mind: but to ſuppoſe from hence, that it is neceſſary to be perpetually plaguing him with the repetition of dry maxims, and antiquated morals, ſubjects you at once to the charge of impertinence, and at the ſame time is an impeachment of your underſtanding.

When the mind is at variance with Peace, ſometimes to indulge the gloomineſs of its ideas, is requiſite to reſtore it to its uſual tranquility. Grief acts by various ways. Upon ſome perſons it operates in an inſtantaneous phrenzy; in others, it wears a gentler form, and ſettles in the dark habit of Melancholy: in either of theſe caſes the mind admits of no conſolation, till Time has corrected, in ſome degree, the violence of the one, and the gloomy inſenſibility of the other, by permitting the return of Philoſophy and Reaſon; which, during the firſt effects of grief, can boaſt of a place only in the boſoms of few perſons.

The Curate, whoſe knowledge of the Human

heart was not drawn from experience, was very ready in the adminiſtration of maxims deduced alone from Theory; but unfortunately, he had never reflected how far they were practicable. The indiſpoſition of his help-mate in a moment ſhewed him the prevalence of Nature, the weakneſs of Philoſophy, and how ſuperficial thoſe reaſons are which derive not their origin from experience.

Sorry as Mrs. Gilbert was for the domeſtic miſfortune of the worthy Clergyman, ſhe nevertheleſs could not avoid making various obſervations on the frequency of giving advice, which, though perhaps ſalutary and well-intended, yet is often ſuch as the giver himſelf is incapable of following, whenever his affairs render ſuch rules neceſſary.

Mr. Lloyd in return obſerved, that every claſs of mankind, the young, the old, the rich, and the poor, all think themſelves alike capable of adviſing the other members of the community: That their inſtructions as frequently ſavour of caprice or ignorance, as of judgment; and hence it was that ſo many people, diffident of their own ſuperior knowledge, are ruined by adhering to the opinions of a ſtranger.

As Mrs. Gilbert began to reſume her wonted tranquility, ſhe, at the deſire of Mr. Lloyd, proceeded with her Narrative:

"Hitherto, Sir, (ſaid ſhe,) you have beheld me alone in the light of a perſon united to a tender and indulgent huſband; but alas! how ſoon is the ſcene to be reverſed! The calm is over, and in the tempeſt we forget all thoughts of former pleaſure.

"No ſooner was Miſs Jones gone, than I began to weigh over repeatedly and deliberately in thought, all ſhe had told me. That Mr. Gilbert was a villain, I made not the leaſt doubt—Every word ſpoke it—every circumſtance confirmed it. 'Tis true, he had hitherto behaved to me with tenderneſs and love: but

but I was ignorant how long that might laſt. Perhaps, thought I, at this very inſtant he may be bartering away my honour to Lord Monſon, or ſome other Wretch equally depraved.—I conſidered myſelf in perpetual danger; and my imagination, naturally fertile in multiplying dangers, repreſented to my mind chains, whips, ſtraw, and every melancholy emblem of a mad-houſe.

"The violation of his vows, the profanation of the marriage ceremony, and the evident diſhonour which marked the whole of his conduct to the unfortunate Charlotte, all conſpired to make me form a reſolution of conſidering myſelf no longer as his wife. I pictured to my fancy what conſequences might naturally reſult from the artifices of a man whom neither Juſtice could reſtrain, nor Honour could bind. They were too dreadful even for thought to endure unmov'd; I was therefore determind to leave him.

"Blind to every conſideration of what my indiſcretion would entail upon me, and inſenſible to the many inconveniencies and dangers my ſex and inexperience both ſubjected me to, I, unknown to any of the ſervants, bundled up a few neceſſaries for which I knew I ſhould have an indiſpenſable neceſſity; and taking with me a ſmall ſum of money, that very evening bid adieu to the habitation of Mr. Gilbert.

"As he was in the country at the time of my putting this plan in execution, I left the following Letter in a place which I was ſure no one viſited beſides himſelf:

"SIR,

"AS you might otherwiſe, perhaps, be at a loſs "to account for my conduct, I have left this Letter "behind me to apologize for it. To a heart naturally "debaſed, it will require an uncommon ſtretch of "faith to credit the poſſibility of there being yet a "perſon exiſting who can ſo far forget the eaſe of "her ſituation, as to embrace a ſtate of dependency;

" and That merely, becauſe ſhe is actuated by the
" the nobleſt, the greateſt motive, a love of VIR-
" TUE. It is not at preſent my intention of enter-
" ing into a more minute explanation of a circum-
" ſtance, which, though painful and ſevere, is ne-
" verthelefs at the ſame time indiſpenſably neceſſary,
" and founded on the baſis of the moſt diſintereſted
" honour. Suffice it to ſay, Sir, I am no ſtranger to
" the cowardice and criminality of your conduct
" with reſpect to *her*, whoſe affection certainly
" merited a more grateful recompence;—but I leave
" you a prey to the ſeverity of your own reflections,
" happy might they be the means of effecting that
" repentance ſo ardently wiſhed you by the unfor-
" tunate

" LOUISA."

" No ſooner had I completed the above epiſtle, than with a ſorrowful heart (which even a conſciouſneſs of the juſtice of the cauſe in which I was then about to embark could not prevent) I departed, leaving word I was going to viſit an acquaintance. Undetermined what courſe or mode of life to purſue, I walked on, ruminating on the fatality attendant on my unfortunate exiſtence, till I actually found myſelf ſeveral miles from town. It was a fine ſummer's evening; the ſun was upon the decline, and the beautiful radiance of the ſky could not have failed producing the moſt pleaſing effects in any other boſom than mine. To me, on the contrary, its ſerenity operated in a different manner, as it only ſerved to remind me of my late happineſs, which, at the very period I thought the moſt permanent and ſolid, I found, owing to the adverſity of my fate, to be in a ſtate the moſt dangerous and uncertain.

" Alas! thought I, how exceedingly fatal and unfortunate have been the various periods and occurrences of my life. Denied the knowledge of my parents;

parents; obliged for my education and ſupport to the benevolence of a ſtranger, and deprived of that benefactor at a time when her aſſiſtance was the moſt neceſſary: my little ALL a prey to the diſhoneſty of a villain; and, to complete the ſcore of my miſeries, united to a man the moſt devoid of honour, whoſe tenderneſs is affected, and whoſe profeſſions of love, alone the offspring of artifice and diſſimulation. It is true, he has ever behaved to me with every exterior mark of affection and regard; but then, may not *that* be accounted for, from a preſumption that his deſigns are as yet not ſufficiently mature for execution? Other Lord Monſons may be found equally as unfeeling, equally as wicked!

"In this manner did I ruminate within myſelf, whilſt the tears plentifully betokened the diſtracted ſtate of my mind. The ſun was now gone down, and I found myſelf at a great diſtance from town, weary, faint, and almoſt benighted: I therefore reſolved upon entering the firſt public houſe I could find, in order to procure ſome little refreſhment which I began to perceive myſelf in much need of.

"Walking onwards with this intention, I was preſently overtaken by a man on horſeback, who, after having ſurveyed me with uncommon attention, ordered me to ſtop. Unable as I was to account for this circumſtance, I however immediately complied with his requeſt; which I had no ſooner done, than producing a piſtol, he demanded my bundle, together with what money I had. Terrified beyond expreſſion and unable to reſiſt, I delivered him the particulars of his demand, of which he had no ſooner poſſeſſed himſelf than he left me to experience the aggravated horrors of poverty and diſtreſs.

CHAP. VIII.

A further Continuation of the principal Matter of this Hiſtory. Reflections on the Power of Idea. The Generoſity of a modern Landlady diſplayed. More Adventures, comprehending a providential Interpoſition, and a rural Aſylum.

"TO a mind truly reſolved, Misfortune, however powerful, is not ſtrong enough to make it relinquiſh its aim. It was juſt ſo with me. Notwithſtanding by this laſt accident I found myſelf doubly deſtitute, I was nevertheleſs determined to perſevere in my former reſolution of for ever ſeparating from ſo baſe a man as Mr. Gilbert. In vain I repreſented to myſelf the many mortifications my poverty would ſubject me to. I armed myſelf againſt every reflection of this kind, and, fortified by the conſideration of the rectitude of my conduct, I was reſolutely bent to proceed in ſpite of every miſchance of Fate.

"Conſidering the former beauty of the evening the night was uncommonly dark, and the gathering clouds ſeemed to indicate the near approach of a ſtorm; this induced mend my pace. The rain however exceeded my utmoſt efforts, and I was ſuddenly drenched in a manner quite through.

"Eſpying a houſe I entered it without ceremony, and enquiring for the hoſteſs, I related to her the circumſtance of my having being robbed, and at the ſame time entreated of her hoſpitality the indulgence of a little refreſhment.

"As my dreſs (which though unadorned with any ſuperfluous finery, was nevertheleſs ſufficiently ſtriking to attract the attention of an obſerver) impreſſed her with an idea of my being ſomewhat ſuperior

ſuperior to that claſs of itinerants whom artifice alone enables to procure a miſerable exiſtence, ſhe very readily admitted of my requeſt. The ſeverity of my ſufferings however hindered me from taſting any kind of nouriſhment, and overwhelmed with ſorrow I retired to bed.

" Nothwithſtanding the fatigue I had undergone, my ſpirits were not ſufficiently compoſed to admit of reſt. Every attempt to ſleep I found was ineffectual. Equally reſtleſs and uneaſy in body and mind, I therefore lay loſt in a labyrinth of thought, counting the tedious minutes and anxiouſly wiſhing for morning.

" Perhaps there is no ſtate of mind the frailty of our natures is ſubject to, more tedious and unbearable than that of expectation when mixed with doubt. By the power of idea we look forward, and find ourſelves almoſt on the point of realizing our wiſhes; when a momentary return of Reaſon awakes us from our fond reverie, to the experience of thoſe miſeries which the ſons and daughters of affliction are ever expoſed to.

" It was juſt ſo with me. Ruminating on my unfortunate ſituation, I ſtill looked forward for happier days. My Ideas painted ſcenes which by the magic of Fancy diſperſed the gloom of my ſorrows, and amidſt the deſart created a living paradiſe. I imagined myſelf free and diſengaged from all my care; I pictured to myſelf every joy, every happineſs, which could await the moſt diſtinguiſhed favourite of Fortune. I conſidered myſelf as no longer labouring under the frown of Adverſity; no longer the ſport of a partial unrelenting world; no longer the partner of affliction. But alas! how vain is fancy! Amidſt this delectable ſcene; amidſt all this necromantic anticipation, originating from deluſive hope; in a moment the uncertainty of future happineſs was loſt

in the aſſuredneſs of preſent diſtreſs, and the clouds of misfortune overſhadowed the gaudy landſcape, which only borrowed its graces from the viſionary phantaſies of a prolific imagination.

" No ſooner were the firſt beams of the ſun viſible on the diſtant hills, than with a ſorrowful heart I aroſe from my bed, and having dreſſed myſelf I began to conſider what courſe it was moſt prudent to purſue. If I continued my ſcheme of proceeding farther into the country, ſurrounded as I was with poverty, I only thereby expoſed myſelf to that certain danger to be dreaded from the known inhumanity of the world, and at the ſame time ſubjected myſelf to the various unjuſtifiable mortifications which unfeeling opulence too often heaps on the diſtreſſed. If I returned back again to London it was but natural to expect Mr. Gilbert would gain intelligence of my reſidence. This thought brought the unfortunate Charlotte to my memory. I reflected on the very inhuman treatment ſhe received; the violence of her love, and the ungrateful return ſhe experienced for an affection ſo ill-placed. The more I indulged theſe reflections, the more was I confirmed in my reſolution of firmly abiding by my prior intention, unmindful of the conſequ nces, and truſting alone to the care of that Providence which never fails affording protection to thoſe who put their truſt therein.

" Having breakfaſted, I found myſelf conſiderably refreſhed, and accordingly prepared myſelf for departure. Addreſſing myſelf therefore to the miſtreſs of the houſe, I returned her thanks for her hoſpitality, and concluded with an aſſurance of amply gratifying her for her many civilities whenever Fortune ſhould enable me ſo to do. She heared me to the end without once attempting to interupt me, and replied by obſerving, " that there were many deſign-
" ing people, who, preſuming on the credulity of
" the

" the weak, gained a ſubſiſtance by impoſing on the " feelings of the humane: that truly ſhe had loſt ſo " much by truſting to promiſes, that—in ſhort, ſhe " was determined *to truſt nobody.*"

" As I was ſtill in poſſeſſion of a few trinkets which had eſcaped the hands of the robber from the poor conſideration of their being unworthy his acceptance, I was fain to relinquiſh the poſſeſſion of them to ſatisfy the fordid cravings of this woman. Theſe, though greatly ſuperior in value to her demand, were with no ſmall reluctance accepted of by her as an equivalent.

" In the grand ſcale of human events, the diſtribution of good and evil is ſo equally made, that we ſeldom meet with a miſchance unaccompanied by ſome bleſſing: the truth of this obſervation I never more particularly demonſtrated than at this period of my life. An elderly Gentleman, who was preſent during the time the *humanity* of the Landlady was ſo *advantageouſly* diſplayed, and who appeared greatly affected at ſo extraordinary a proof of a diſpoſition ſo ungenerous, ſeeing me about to depart, and probably conjecturing, by a ſettled air of melancholy which viſibly hung about me, that ſomething fatal prayed upon my mind, deſired, before I departed, that I would permit him to ſpeak a few ſyllables to me in private. Notwithſtanding I was greatly at a loſs to account for the ſingularity of this requeſt, I nevertheleſs made not the leaſt heſitation to obey him.

" My dear child," ſays he, the moment we were alone, " I perceive by your behaviour that it is " ſomething more than the bare circumſtance of the " robbery which thus afflicts you. I do not aſk you " what it is; ſuch a requeſt would probably be im- " pertinent. But if either my advice or my for- " tune can aſſiſt you, and be the inſtrument of diſ-

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" pelling that melancholy which ſurrounds you, you " have only to ſpeak. I am ſeldom deceived in " reading the countenance : your's carries with it " every mark calculated to convince me it is an ho- " neſt one, and, ſpite of the gloom which over- " whelms your ſpirits, greatly prepoſſeſſes me in " your favour."

" Notwithſtanding his freedoom at firſt ſomewhat alarmed my delicacy, I was yet greatly charmed with his frankneſs, and for a time actually forgot the ſeverity of my ſufferings. In return for the extreme generoſity of an offer ſo apparently diſintereſted, I juſt made him acquainted with as much of my ſtory as it was neceſſary for him to know, without abſolutely giving him reaſon to queſtion my prudence.

" He heard me attentively to the end, and then interrogated me in what manner I intended to make proviſion for a future ſubſiſtence. This is what I was every way unprepared to anſwer, which he inſtantly perceiving bade me be under no uneaſineſs, as it ſhould be his care to attend to that circumſtance.

" Favourable as the point of view was in which I beheld him, and after making every allowance for the manifeſt frankneſs of his diſpoſition, I was nevertheleſs ſtartled at his offer ; I feared I might be miſtaken, doubted the diſintereſtedneſs of his motives, and pictured to myſelf thoſe ſnares, thoſe artifices, which my departed benefactor ſo particularly cautioned me of. It was her laſt advice, and I was determined to guard myſelf againſt them.

" The good old Gentleman perceived my doubts, " and ſmiled as if pleaſed at a caution ſo neceſſary. " Fear not, Madam (ſays he) I mean you no harm ; " on the contrary, would ſhield your innocence from " the hand of Violation and from the tongue of " Scandal,

" Scandal, which malevolently aims to deſtroy the " unſullied purity of that Reputation which is " founded on the firmeſt baſis of public Honour. " From me depend upon every protection which " Virtue might juſtly demand from the deareſt " friend, from the moſt indulgent parent."

" Having in this manner encouraged me to lay aſide my doubts, he deſired me to continue where I then was till his return, and immediately quitted my preſence with a declaration of ſpeedily ſeeing me again.

" During his abſence I employed myſelf in aiming at a ſolution of this riddle. It was impoſſible: the more I conſidered it, the more incapable was I to account for its novelty. The well-known ſcarcity of characters ſo exemplary, impreſſed me with the moſt thankful adoration that Providence at ſo lucky an interval had raiſed one up for my relief. My tears manifeſted my gratitude for a bleſſing ſo unexpected, a bleſſing which determined me no longer to reſign myſelf up to grief, but cheerfully and thankfully to enjoy thoſe comforts which I fondly fancied Fortune had yet in ſtore for me.

" You might have perceived, Sir, on your firſt acquaintance with me (continued our heroine, ſtill addreſſing herſelf to Mr. Lloyd) that Nature has bountifully beſtowed upon me a more than ordinary portion of ſpirits. My intrepidity has taught me utterly to diſregard the common accidents of mortality, as of too inconſiderable a nature to merit the attention, or diſturb the ſerenity of a philoſophic mind. This ſingularity of ſentiment, indeed, ſometimes carries me ſo far as to ſubject me to the accuſation of an inſenſibility to the weakneſſeſs and ſufferings of my fellow-creatures: this charge is however at once cruel and unjuſt. To my own ſufferings alone I am inſenſible; to the reſt of mankind I am ever ready

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in the adminiſtration of every conſolatory aid which might be hoped for, from the willing hand of ſympathetic Friendſhip.

"In little more than an hour after the departure of my new acquaintance, I had the ſatisfaction to witneſs his return. He came accompanied by a Lady of nearly his own age: ſhe was one of thoſe kind of figures which never fail at firſt ſight of impreſſing the ſpectator in their favour. Her appearance betrayed the moſt indubitable evidence of her having been in her youth uncommonly handſome, and in ſpite of the attacks of time and ſickneſs, her countenance ſtill poſſeſſed that pleaſing ſomething which few can behold with indifference.

"Well, Madam," ſays he, with the greateſt good humour, "you now perceive I am a man of my "word; hence-forward I expect, in conſequence "of this aſſurance, that you credit whatever I ſay "to you. And leſt you ſhould heſitate to truſt "yourſelf to ſo *young* a man as myſelf, I have pre-"vailed upon my wife here to accompany me, and "to aſſiſt me in requeſting you to take up your re-"ſidence at our homely habitation, till Fortune "may better provide for you.';

"You will not accuſe me, Sir, of diſingenuity, if I confeſs that I was greatly pleaſed with the comfortable ſituation this adventure ſo opportunately promiſed to afford me. I diſcovered every reaſon which might induce me to atribute it to a particular intervention of Providence in my favour, and in conſequence of that perſuaſion I required but little argument to determine me to accept ſo agreeable an offer.

"The houſe to which they conducted me was a plain unadorned ſtructure, the ſituation at once rural and romantic: it adounded with every conveniency which the moſt capricious fancy could create. Its gardens

gardens were neat without Art, and fanciful without tranſgreſſing the bounds of Nature. In ſhort, to avoid deſcription, it was altogether ſuch a ſpot as I would have choſen, had I been indulged with the priviledge of conſulting for myſelf.

"Without much enquiry I eaſily learnt the name of this worthy couple, which was Hilton. They had been married many years, during which period they had experienced as few croſſes as could be hoped for from the known uncertainty of human happineſs. Nothwithſtanding the length of time elapſed ſince their marriage they had but one child, which was a ſon, intended for the ſervice of the church, and who was then finiſhing his education at one of the Univerſities.

"The fond Mother dwelt with the moſt eager tranſport on the virtues and qualifications of her dear ſon: he was for ever in her thoughts; the object of her prayers, and perpetual idol of her imagination. Oft would ſhe begin a relation of ſome occurrence, the publication of which ſhe ſuppoſed might contribute to the honour of her darling, and as often would ſhe interrupt herſelf by an inſtantaneous exclamation of praiſe, unmindful of her promiſed narration, and unable to proceed.

"Theſe circumſtances I naturally attributed to their proper ſource—the extravagance of partial affection; nor was I any ways impatient to behold one whoſe encomium I was every hour a ſilent hearer of. Happy for me had my knowledge of him been confined within that bound! But Fortune, which unexpectedly raiſes up obſtacles where we leaſt expect to find them, was not yet weary of perſecuting me, but once more caſt me forth on the wide world to the experience of freſh miſery.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Deſcription of a Collegian. Love ſuperior to Learning. A ſick Bed, and an unexpected Declaration.

"WITH this worthy family I paſſed four months in an agreeable uninterrupted tranquillity, nor in all that while did they trouble me with any enquiries which they apprehended might prove diſagreeable for me to anſwer. I, on my part, conducted myſelf with the utmoſt prudence and circumſpection, and even pleaſed myſelf with the idea of having made no inconſiderable progreſs in the eſtimation of my Benefactors.

"The recollection of former ſcenes, in ſpite of all my care to ſuppreſs it, would however occaſionally intrude upon my thoughts: I endeavoured to forget them, but every effort was vain. Obliged to be a witneſs to the happineſs of others, it is but natural to ſuppoſe that for a time I regretted the loſs of that mutual regard which alone conſtitutes true happineſs, a happineſs I once fondly fancied I was in full poſſeſſion of.

"Theſe reflections however, frequent and ſevere as they were, did not ſo far affect me as to hinder my reſuming my wonted cheerfulneſs. I no longer afflicted myſelf with ruminating on the villainy of mankind, but, bleſſed in the enjoyment of every ſatisfaction my imagination could wiſh for in a rural abode, I gratefully poured forth my thanks to the divine Author of my being, for having in the hour of trial graciouſly provided me a retreat ſo unexceptionably agreeable.

"About four months after I had enjoyed the pleaſures of this retirement, Mrs. Hilton informed me that her ſon was every day expected from college. The good old Lady could not diſſemble her joy on this

this occaſion. Every preparation in her power was made for his welcome, and in a few days after ſhe had imparted to me the tidings, agreeable to her expectation he arrived.

"As I had ſo frequently borne witneſs to his praiſes, I was the more particular in obſerving him. The firſt view of him convinced me of my miſtake in reſpect to the opinion I had formed of him. I thought to have beheld a raw inexperienced boy, embraſſed with the aukward airs of a College, elated with the empty pride of ſuperficial pedantry, and unacquainted with the more poliſhed manners of polite life; inſtead of which, I diſcovered him poſſeſſed of every requiſite conducive to the formation of the gentleman and the ſcholar: courteous without compliment, and learned without affectation.

"Nor was Nature leſs bountiful to his perſon than to his mind. He was poſſeſſed of a fine figure, in hight rather ſuperior to the common ſize, and exactly proportioned in all his features; his eyes black and ſparkling, and his countenance replete with that majeſtic ſweetneſs which at once captivates and commands.

"He apparently regarded me with no leſs attention than I did him, and during the ſhort intervals he could ſpare from the embraces of his fond parents, his eyes were ſcarcely employed in any other manner than that of gazing on me. This, nevertheleſs, cauſed no uneaſineſs in me, as I had bound myſelf by the ſtrongeſt reſolution of for ever diſregarding the world and its flatteries. The attention with which he regarded me, determined me however more than ever to be cautious againſt the wiles of mankind, as I knew the frailty of my own nature, and was therefore fearful of expoſing myſelf to a temptation ſo manifeſtly dangerous.

"Notwithſtanding the intimacy with which I

was received by every individual in his family, I had, for obvious reaſons, never intruſted any one of them with the ſecret of my marriage, nor had they to appearance the leaſt ſuſpicion of that circumſtance. Their regard for the preſervation of that tranquillity they perceived me in ſuch full poſſeſſion of, hindered them from queſtioning me on ſo delicate a ſubject. They found I was averſe to an explanation which ſo nearly affected me, and therefore prudently avoided giving me any uneaſineſs by a requeſt ſo unreaſonable.

"I now every day became ſtill more ſatisfied with my ſituation. The agreeable converſation of young Mr. Hilton gave an agreeable zeſt to the unvaried occurrences of the day, and cauſed the time to paſs with a pleaſure uncommon. As he had a fine voice he occaſionally obliged us with a ſong; ſometimes he read to us; and as he had conſiderable ſkill in the ſcience of muſic, we ſeldom were in want of amuſement. By aids like theſe we inſured to ourſelves every moderate gratification which a grateful mind could wiſh the enjoyment of; we were in full poſſeſſion of that ſecret ſatisfaction which is the reſult of innocence, and we regulated our conduct by the rules of Virtue, which are not the leſs valuable for being unfaſhionable.

"The harmony of our little ſociety was however unfortunately interrupted by the unexpected illneſs of this amiable young gentleman, who without any viſible cauſe grew ſuddenly melancholy and thoughtful. The depreſſion of ſpirits under which he laboured was ſo ſurprizing, as to alarm his almoſt diſtracted parents with the moſt horrible apprehenſions. I had obſerved him to have loſt much of his uſual vivacity; he no longer was ſolicitious to raiſe our mirth by thoſe innocent inventions he had formerly practiſed for our amuſement; his voice

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was no longer diſtinguiſhable amidſt the ſons of gaiety; and I more than once ſurprized him in tears, which convinced me ſomething lay upon his mind which defied the power of medicine.

"His tender, his indulgent parents were inconſolable. He was the idol on which they had built their hopes; the lamp of their eyes, and the ſtaff of their declining age. No care, no expence was neglected, to reinſtate *that* health ſo immediately neceſſary for the preſervation of their own. But it was all in vain. The poiſon was too far ſpread, and its malignity betrayed the moſt alarming ſymptoms.

"The Phyſicians, with a candour exceedingly commendable, confeſſed their inability to relieve or aſſiſt him. It was a diſorder of the mind, they ſaid, which admitted of no alleviation from the greateſt exertion of medical ſkill, and they therefore admoniſhed his parents to endeavour at extracting from him the fatal ſecret ſo prejudicial to his peace, as the only probable means of reſcuing him from the grave.

"In conſequence of this advice, his afflicted Father and Mother, with the moſt unwearied care and aſſiduity, attempted to prevail upon him to impart to them the cauſe of his melancholy. All their endeavours were however ineffectual; and almoſt deſpairing of their purpoſe, they lived the mournful ſpectators of the indiſpoſition of a beloved child, without the certainty of knowing to what cauſe to attribute it.

"Will you ever thus perſevere in concealing "from us the motive of your illneſs?" ſaid Mrs. "Hilton to him one day. I need not mention to you "how much your welfare is neceſſary for the pre-"ſervation of ours; your natural good ſenſe will "ſufficiently explain to you a truth ſo evident. It will

" will be equally unneceſſary to remind you of the " many proofs you have received of our unalterable " affection ; they ſpeak for themſelves. No longer " then perſiſt in a reſerve, dangerous to your own " ſafety, and highly criminal to the duty you owe " to the indulgence of a fond parent."

" Ceaſe, I beg you, my dear mother," he replied. " Why would you wiſh me to relate a cir- " cumſtance that can only tend to diſtreſs you, " without a probabilty of affording me any benefit ? " The great Searcher of all hearts knows with what " reluctance I diſobey you ; but in the grave alone " can I hope for that relief which this world denies " me. The recollection of your love ; the recol- " lection of the many uncommon acts of indulgence " I have received from you, only ſerves to diſtreſs " me in a more particular manner, as I am truly " ſenſible of my own unworthineſs, and of the un- " grateful return I am making for your more than " paternal kindneſs. Let me however conjure you, " by that love and affection you have ever mani- " feſted for me, by the regard you have for my " peace here and happineſs hereafter, not to afflict " yourſelf at an event which Reaſon and Religion " have taught us to live in continual expectation " of. Should Heaven think proper to ſummon me " from this world of ſorrows, it will no doubt re- " compenſe you for the loſs of me by ſome wiſe " method beyond the reach of our contracted view. " You ſhall not want comfort, my mother ; and " though you ſhould drink of the bitter cup, ſmall " ſhall be the draught, and quickly ſhall it paſs away " from you."

" In this manner did he continually anſwer the repeated deſire of his parents, whilſt his melancholy every day increaſed ; which adding to the deſpair of all around him, transformed our dwelling into the houſe of lamentation.

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"It had been a cuſtom with me to record every particular circumſtance of my life, the remembrance of which I thought worth preſerving; for which purpoſe I had provided myſelf with a ſmall book, in which I occaſionally inſerted thoſe occurrences which my fancy or judgment ſuggeſted to be of ſufficient moment. To my unſpeakable grief I one morning unfortunately loſt this book, and ſpite of every inquiry could gain no intelligence of it.

"Having carefully examined every place which bore the leaſt probability of finding it without effect, I gave over all further ſearch; when one morning the ſervant informed me that her young maſter requeſted to ſpeak with me. He was alone, but, "*ſo fallen, ſo chang'd!* — I ſcarcely perceived in him the features of the once gay, and ſprightly Mr. Hilton; on the contrary, he preſented to my view a contraſt wonderfully great. His fine eyes were no longer full of fire, no longer ſparkling, but borrowed their preſent faint luſtre from the tears which quivered in them. The vermillion of his cheeks had given way to a deadly ſallow, and his whole figure bore more reſemblance to the emaciated picture of inanimation, than to that of a living object.

"To my infinite ſurprize, I perceived in his hand the book I had ſo long and ſo vainly ſought for, and to increaſe my aſtoniſhment (having firſt deſired I would be ſeated) he addreſſed me in a faint tone of voice, nearly in the following manner:

"That ſecret, Madam, which I refuſed to the "voice of Duty, which I refuſed to the deſire of an "unexceptionable parent, I make no ſcruple to en- "truſt you with. In this book read the cauſe of "my indiſpoſition: there, Madam, I gained the "knowledge of a circumſtance, which at once ſur- "prized me and rendered me the moſt unhappy of "mankind. Let me not however arraign the juſ-

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" tice of Providence. The mark to which I aſpir-
" ed was far, very far beyond my deſerts, and I
" juſtly fall a ſacrifice to my temerity and preſump-
" tion. Know, Madam, that from the firſt mo-
" ment I beheld you, I loved you. Have you ne-
" ver—or was you really ignorant of your conqueſt?
" Have you never obſerved with what attention I
" beheld you? My deſires, confined as they were
" within the limits of Virtue, were, I fear, but
" too viſible. You had however nothing to dread
" from my paſſion—it was, it is true, a violent one
" but entirely untainted by the breath of licentiouſ-
" neſs I beheld in you the woman calculated to
" make me happy; I contempleated your charms
" with that ſilent and reſpectful adoration, which
" diſtinguiſhes the ſaint when he approaches his
" Deity. I liſtened and I was charmed; I gazed
" and I was loſt!

" In this manner, Madam, did I paſs my time,
" incapable of diſguiſing my paſſion, yet wanting
" reſolution to declare it. The more I ſaw you,
" the more firmly were my fetters rivetted, whilſt
" the fatal poiſon gained every day new ſtrength.

" As I was one morning amuſing myſelf in the
" garden with ruminating on you, the object of my
" wiſhes, I accidentally found this book: curioſity
" induced me to examine it; and perceiving it to
" be your's, my deſire of inſpecting it became more
" violent. Without ſufficiently conſidering the diſ-
" honourable part I was acting, I retired to my apart-
" ment, where my impertinent curioſity met with
" ample chaſtiſement. I there learnt, Madam, that
" you are already the property of another! This
" knowledge, which, without leſſening my paſſion,
" at one ſtroke entirely deprived me of my hopes,
" is the occaſion of the condition to which you ſee
" me reduced. I only requeſt, Madam, your pardon

"and

" and pity; ſhould you grant me that ſmall ſatisfac-
" tion before I die, I ſhall yet depart in peace."

" I was ſo thunderſtruck with this intelligence that I knew not how to behave; I greatly and ſincerely commiſerated the ſituation of this amiable young Gentleman. I perceived a ſtrange fatality prevalent wherever my unlucky Fate aſſigned me a reſidence, and unable to ſpeak, with a heart ſwelling with grief, I retired to my chamber."

CHAP. X.

The Violence of Paternal Affection. Reaſon incapable of regulating the Exceſſes of Love. The Affections not to be tutored by Philoſophy. A fruitleſs Interview, and a Scene of Diſtreſs.

" AFTER unexpectedly witneſſing a declaration ſo truly pathetic as that I have juſt repeated (continued Mrs. Gilbert) you will naturally conclude, Sir, that my mind was not in poſſeſſion of the moſt perfect tranquillity. I revolved within myſelf every circumſtance of a life, which from the earlieſt period had manifeſted a continued ſcene of miſery: I execrated the moment which had introduced me to the acquaintance of a family, where, in return for the moſt liberal and diſintereſted generoſity, it was but too evident I had been, though unintentionally, the unhappy inſtrument to interrupt that ſocial, and till then, unvaried flow of domeſtic tranſport I found them in poſſeſſion of. Language, Sir, is incapable of depicturing with propriety the melancholy ideas which crouded upon my Fancy. My tears evidenced the ſincerity of my ſorrows, and ſuffering under the oppreſſive load of reflection, I remained petrified with grief, an almoſt lifeleſs monument of ſupine inactivity.

" Mrs.

" Mrs. Hilton, who had received immediate information of her ſon's inclination to ſee me, and of the ſubſequent interview I had given him in conſequence of his requeſt, interrupted the ſeverity of my thoughts by her appearance. With the moſt anxious ſolicitude ſhe appeared deſirous of penetrating into my very ſoul, endeavouring thereby to trace the cauſe of his illneſs. The truly dejected and ſorrowful ſtate ſhe found me in, ſerved however only to add to her deſpondency, and to confirm the Deſpair which had taken ſuch entire poſſeſſion of her faculties. I read her anxiety with pain, and beheld the obſtinate ſtruggle betwixt her tenderneſs and her delicacy with that pity, which a feeling mind is ever liberal in extending to the afflicted.

" After a few moments ſilence I made her acquainted with the ſecret Mr. Hilton had communicated to me. I diſcloſed to her the particulars of my marriage (concealing only the name of my huſband) and the indiſſoluble bar Fate had thereby raiſed to the deſires his paſſion had given birth to. I lamented the impoſſibility of my ever rendering her the grateful return the generoſity of her treatment to me merited; and concluded with aſſuring her of my ready compliance with any honourable meaſure compatible with my ſex and ſituation, that offered the leaſt probability of affecting her ſon's recovery.

" It may eaſily be conjectured what muſt have been the feelings of a fond Mother at ſo affecting a piece of intelligence. She was however far more compoſed than I expected her; not a ſigh, not a murmur, eſcaped her: collected in herſelf, ſhe heard every particular with fortitude. She ſaw it was the will of Heaven that her child ſhould no longer live an inhabitant of this mortal element, and ſhe humbled herſelf to the divine mandate with all the firmneſs and unſhaken reſolution which could poſſibly diſtinguiſh the greatneſs of all characters--*a chriſtian Philoſopher.*

" Early

"Barely to ſay I pitied her, would be infinitely inexpreſſive of the anguiſh which poſſeſſed my ſoul. My feelings were awakened by a ſenſe of her ſufferings, and I contemplated her affliction as the prelude to ſome event ſtill more deſtructive to my peace than thoſe which I had already experienced.

"My apprehenſions were but too juſt. The tender, the indulgent parent, exhauſted with anxiety for the preſervation of her child, and deſpairing of ever ſeeing him re-inſtated in the enjoyment of that tranquillity ſo immediately neceſſary for the effecting a reeſtabliſhment of his health, began now herſelf to ſtand in need of ſome part of that attention which had hitherto been altogether directed to her darling. She was, it is true, far more compoſed than we could in reaſon expect, from the extreme violence of her affection, and the diſappointment of her hopes; ſhe acknowledged the juſtice of Providence even in the ſufferings of her ſon; ſhe ſaw the wiſdom of the Deity apparently diſplayed in depriving her of the object of her idolatry; ſhe perceived the vanity of relying on human aſſiſtance, and, ſubmiſſively humbling herſelf to the diſpenſations of the Almighty, ſhe placed her confidence on Heaven, which is alone able to protect us in the day of tribulation.

"The continual agitation of ſpirits ſhe had before endured, agravated by the unvaried attention ſhe had adminiſtered to the infirmities of her unfortunate favourite, began now to manifeſt to us what we had to fear. Spite of her fortitude her conſtitution declined apace; her eyes no longer beamed with the glow of tranſport and ſatisfaction; her face no more diſplayed that ſoft ſerenity, which, tempered by the infant ſmile of pleaſure, diſpenſed joy to all around her; her cheek no longer fluſhed with the bloom of health, till then rendered durable by a life of Virtue; but wan, dejected, and ſorrowful, ſhe ſat, "*like Patience on a monument ſmiling at Grief!*"

"I yet entertained hopes, that after having unburthened his thoughts in the manner before related, it would be no very difficult matter to perſuade the young Gentleman of the abſurdity of permitting his Love ſo far to gain the aſcendency over his Reaſon. I knew his good ſenſe to be unqueſtionable, and, abſtracted from the fooliſh paſſion which then ſo totally unman'd him, I had every cauſe to ſuppoſe the extent of his underſtanding to be far ſuperior to the ordinary accidents of life. Depending upon this belief, I formed a determination of ſeeing and expoſtulating with him on his indulging ſo poor, ſo unmanly a paſſion to ſo dangerous an exceſs, an exceſs, which threatened a final ſubverſion of Reaſon and of Religion. It will do! ſaid I to myſelf. I will inſiſt with him on the folly of being led away by a motive ſo unphiloſophical: I will lay before him examples of the greateſt and the wiſeſt of mortals; men who purchaſed to themſelves everlaſting fame by reſiſting the attacks of wordly affections: I will unfold to him the evils which reſult from the indulgence of that worſt and moſt pernicious of all errors — LOVE: I will revive in his breaſt an ambition for Virtue, and a contempt for the vices and weakneſſes of human nature, as incompatible with the greatneſs and dignity of a mind enlarged by Reflection: and I will teach him (contented with the friendſhip I *can* afford him) to view his folly in its proper light; and doubt not but he will cordially thank me for having ſnatched him from the influence of a paſſion repugnant to virtue, and replete with ruin and deſtruction to Philoſophy, Reaſon, and Morality.

"The precipitate and unceremonious manner in which I had left him the laſt time I ſaw him, likewiſe ſeemed to demand ſome apology from me. The commotion of mind I then endured operated ſo ſtrongly on my feelings, as to render me incapable of conveying

veying him back an anſwer agreeable either to his wiſhes, or my intentions. This conſideration therefore determined me in my reſolution of ſeeing him, however oppoſed by Delicacy, Prudery, or the falſely refined doctrine of faſhionable decorum.

" Fluctuating betwixt the extremes of Hope and Fear I approached his bed — but, gracious Heaven! how, in a ſingle moment, was every flattering idea overthrown! ——

" Imagine to yourſelf, Sir, apparently lifeleſs, an object that was wont to preſent to my eyes the uncounterfeit portrait of Health and Manhood, —now " pining with grief, and overgrown with ſorrows." The ſcene ſtaggered me, and ſpite of every previous determination ſtruck me at once irreſolute and dumb.

" My preſence however ſerved to rouſe him from the death-like lethargy which had taken ſuch hold of him. A momentary gleam of tranſport infuſed itſelf into his eyes, and the ſudden animation enlivened all his features, whilſt he contemplated my perſon with that pleaſure which nothing leſs than a real paſſion could inſpire.

" A trifling interval having moderated the violence of his tranſports, he almoſt inſtantly re-aſſumed his uſual tranquility, which by the powers of Reflection was as expeditiouſly converted into a dejection at once painful and pitiable.

" I wiſhed to addreſs him; I attempted it: the attempt however was rendered abortive by the interference of my feelings. I was fearful of reviving in his mind the memory of a circumſtance which had originally occaſioned his indiſpoſition. I perceived more than ever the difficulty of regulating the exceſſes of Love by the voice of Argument; and I ſaw the inſufficiency of Philoſophy, when oppoſed by Nature and Affection.

" He read my perplexity, and recollecting himſelf

for a moment, in a plaintive tone of voice he addreſſed me in a manner which, as it then claimed my attention, ſerved no leſs to leave a laſting impreſſion upon my memory.

" To know, Madam, that you do not hate me ; " to be allowed to ſpend my laſt moments in the cer- " tainty of being pitied by you, is fully ſufficient to " recompenſe me for all the pain and anxiety I have " ſuffered on your account. I am not inſenſible of " your kindneſs in thus viſiting me. Would to Hea- " ven it were in my power properly to expreſs my " thankfulneſs on the occaſion, or that my death " might be the means of contributing to your future " felicity! With what zeal would I embrace it! With " what pleaſure would I make the " ſacrifice!

" Should you vouchſafe, Madam, hereafter ſome- " times to think of a man whoſe ſole misfortune " aroſe from Error, and a ſuſceptibility of Love, " and whoſe puniſhment was at leaſt adequate to " the offence; think of him as one who was above " attempting by artifice to avail himſelf of a partia- " lity which was but too manifeſtly in his favour, " and who ſcorned to injure, even in thought, that " Virtue it was his wiſh to protect."

" Encouraged by the freedom with which he de- livered this addreſs, I yet hoped to prevail upon him to liſten to the force of argument ; flattering myſelf that when he had ſufficiently reflected on what I ſhould offer, he would no longer indulge a folly, which, perverting the powers of Reaſon, threatened in the end to be productive of the moſt fatal conſequences.

" Buoyed up by theſe hopes, which however indifferently founded, ſtill favoured my intentions : I commended the taſk of expoſtulating with him on the abſurdity of his conduct ; I combated his paſſion with an exertion of every argument I was miſtreſs of;

of; I painted to him the criminality, the cowardice of yielding to an effeminacy derogatory to the dignity of Manhood. I ſhewed him the inefficacy of deſpair, and how particularly it behoved him to ſhake off a weakneſs which only ſerved to render him unhappy; and finally, I deſcribed to him the ſituation of his mother, whoſe illneſs proceeded entirely from the ſorrow of finding him perſiſt in the obſtinate indulgence of a melancholy, which required nothing more than a little reſolution finally to withſtand.

"He heard me with attention, and as if doubtful of my ſincerity, replied—

"Seek not, Madam, to divert my miſeries, by "condemning a paſſion which you have inſpired, "and which (however oppoſed by argument) it is "impoſſible for time to eradicate. The remem- "brance of the many cheerful hours I have paſſed "when under the ſweet influence of that paſſion, "and undiſturbed by the fatal ſecret, the knowledge "of which has been the occaſion of my indiſpoſiti- "on, ſtill gives me ſome pleaſure, in ſpite of the "miſchances of Fate, and the unpromiſing harveſt "which apparently threatens to mock my toils. If "my affection has been miſplaced, is it my fault? "Ought I not rather to condemn an exiſtence where "nothing but diſappointment and pain appear to "my view, and where I may every inſtant expect "to be overwhelmed by the billows of misfortune "and the malignancy of Deſpair?

"In the ſcale of Deſtiny, Argument has no "weight; Reſolution loſes its powers, and whatever "concluſions may be drawn from Learning and "Philoſophy, are ultimately found inſufficient to "oppoſe the united force of Nature and Affection.

"Think not, Madam, that I have blindly and "wilfully plunged into an Error, and infatuated with "paſſion have obſtinately refuſed to liſten to the

" admonitions of Prudence. On the contrary, re-
" gard me as one who, ſenſible of his fault, ſenſible
" of his own unworthineſs, the impropriety of his
" pretenſions, and the extreme frailty of his hopes,
" has collected every precept, every argument, in
" oppoſition to a weakneſs which threatened in its
" progreſs to overwhelm the principles of Virtue
" and the properties of Reaſon.

" But alas! how vain and ineffectual it is to reſiſt
" the current of affection!—In ſpite of oppoſition
" my paſſion viſibly prevails; and I find myſelf
" hourly haſtening to that ſhore, where, alike in-
" ſenſible to the pains and pleaſures of mortality,
" I ſhall have nothing to fear from the attacks of
" libidinous appetites, nor the malicious interpreta-
" tions of a cenſorious world."

" It was now for the firſt time I entirely began to deſpair of making any effect upon him by the power of argument: I ſaw the vanity of the attempt; and I ſoon after took my leave of him—took my leave of him *for ever!*"

CHAP. XI.

Death an infallible Phyſician. An unwelcome Viſitor. An Epiſtle Explanatory, and an Elopement Extraordinary.

" THE firſt intelligence the ſucceeding morning preſented to me was that of the death of Mr. Hilton, who, unable to oppoſe the violence of a love fatal to his repoſe, fell at laſt a ſacrifice to the delicacy of ſentimental attachment.

" Sorry as I was for his untimely fate, as knowing myſelf the cauſe, I was nevertheleſs ſomewhat comforted when I reflected that I was the involuntary inſtrument of his misfortunes, and that I had endeavoured

endeavoured by every method in my power to wean him from a paſſion which I repreſented to him as deſtructive of Virtue, and prejudicial to his everlaſting happineſs.

" Having paid the tribute due to his memory by devoting to his merit a flood of tears, my care was next attracted by an attention to the ſafety of his mother. From the moment I had unravelled to her the cauſe of her ſon's indiſpoſition, ſhe had taken to her bed; and notwithſtanding the apparent fortitude and reſignation which evidently marked her behaviour, ſhe was nevertheleſs ſo " *ſteep'd in ſorrows*," that I was fearful of the conſequences which might reſult from informing her of his Fate.

" The caution I obſerved on this head was however unneceſſary. The inſtant I approached the place where ſhe lay, with a ſigh that ſeemed to rend her heart, ſhe exclaimed—" Then he is gone! ſo are " all my hopes! Notwithſtanding—thy will, O my " God, be done!"

" I exerted no endeavour to deceive her; but on the contrary adminiſtered to her ſorrows, from a natural preſumption that the moſt violent griefs the ſooneſt abate.

" Her misfortunes however were not of the common kind. A ſon ſhe tenderly loved; a ſon, on whom her every hope was fixed, and whoſe welfare ſo immediately depended her own; to find him cut off in life's gay dawn—it was too much!—The tear of ſenſibility which reflects luſtre on the *mother*, can never diſgrace the eye of a *chriſtian*.

" Having fulfilled the laſt office for the dead by conſigning his body to the earth, that common receptacle of mortality, we began imperceptibly to forget our griefs, and to reconcile ourſelves to a loſs which it was impoſſible we could by any means prevent. Mrs. Hilton however ſtill continued in ſo

indifferent a ſtate of health, that we were doubly aſſiduous in ſeeking out any amuſement which we thought might tend to diſperſe her dejection; nor were we without hopes that ſhe would yet regain that tranquillity which I found her in poſſeſſion of, and which it was my wiſh to be inſtrumental in reſtoring.—But I was fated to be a wanderer!—

"One morning whilſt I was buſily employed about ſomething in my bed-chamber, I was alarmed by a loud knocking at the door; I inſtantly, by an irreſiſtible impulſe, moved toward the window, and to my unſpeakable mortification and ſurprize diſcovered, juſt diſmounted from his horſe,—Mr. Gilbert!

"It immediately occurred to me that he had by ſome accident or other diſcovered my reſidence, and was come to demand me back as his wife, a name I held in the utmoſt abhorrence; and was therefore determined to reject every overture which he might make me; *that* alone excepted, of an eternal ſeparation.

"Gracious Heaven! what were my feelings at this inſtant! Every horrid idea that could poſſibly actuate the human mind ruſhed upon my imagination, and bore down Reaſon, Senſe, and Reflection. The ſeduction and proſtitution of the unfortunate Charlotte; the cowardly triumph he enjoyed over her innocence, and the ſhameleſs method by which he rewarded her ill-placed affection, all returned upon my memory in colours which Fancy could alone furniſh in the brain of Deſpair and Madneſs.

"I was amazed that I had not yet been deſired to walk down ſtairs, but this I attributed to his cunning, ſuppoſing he had found employment in prejudicing my benefactors againſt whatever I might offer in vindication of myſelf, by impoſing upon their confidence with a relation of circumſtances,

fabricated

fabricated by art, and however probable, untinctured with truth and candour.

" I was often inclined voluntarily to confront him by my appearance, which, if unexpectedly made, I conjectured might tend to my advantage, by deſtroying the ſubtilty of his arguments, and by producing in my favour that credit which innocence is ſuppoſed ever to poſſeſs over malevolence and deceit.

" This intention was, however, rendered uſeleſs, by the entrance of a ſervant, who informed me that my company was requeſted to dinner. A circumſtance ſo extraordinary ſtaggered my reſolution of ſeeing him. Perhaps, thought I, he is only on a viſit to the family, unactuated by any expectation of meeting with me; ſhould ſuch be the caſe, which, from appearances, is nothing improble, it would be the height of folly to expoſe myſelf to certain danger by diſcloſing myſelf; and that too at a time when I can ſo eaſily avoid it, by pleading an indiſpoſition, which will at once apologize for my not appearing, and ſhield me from the danger attending a diſcovery.

" Agreeable to this reſolution, I ſent word, that finding myſelf indiſpoſed, I begged they would excuſe the circumſtance of my not favouring them with my company, expreſſing at the ſame time a deſire of remaining undiſturbed in my own apartment.

" This meſſage inſtantly brought up Mrs. Hilton, whoſe affection for me was little inferior to that ſhe had conceived for her ſon, the memory of whom ſtill operated ſo ſtrongly in her mind, as to ſadden every reflection however foreign to the melancholy theme which had ſo long dwelt upon her thought, and which we wiſhed in vain to ſee entirely forgot by her.

" Anxiouſly ſolicitous for my welfare, with a motherly degree of regard ſhe enquired into the cauſe of my illneſs, and was deſirous of prevailing upon me to join the company below, as the moſt

probable means of diſperſing the gloom which then ſurrounded me. Finding me, however, averſe to her deſire, ſhe left me, after apologizing for her intruſion, and extorting from me a promiſe of endeavouring to take ſome kind of nouriſhment in my chamber.

"I was never perhaps leſs diſpoſed for eating than I was at this inſtant of my life. Ignorant as I was what conſtruction to put upon Mr. Gilbert's viſit, having never heard him mention the name of the Hilton family, my mind was in ſuch continual fluctuation between the extremes of hope and deſpair, that I could find but little inclination to eat, how much ſoever I began to ſtand in need of bodily refreſhment.

"From Mrs. Hilton's behaviour it was evident that ſhe was unacquainted with the connection ſubſiſting betwixt Mr. Gilbert and myſelf. The good opinion they entertained of me, led me to ſuppoſe that he would find it no eaſy taſk to prejudice them againſt me; nor was I apprehenſive that they would altogether condemn my conduct, when I had made them acquainted with the motives which had induced me to a ſtep ſo extraordinary.

"Armed with theſe hopes, I waited as patiently as one ſo circumſtanced could well be expected to do, and about ſun-ſet perceived, to my great ſatisfaction, preparation making for his departure, which was ſhortly after accompliſhed.

"Notwithſtanding I had nothing remaining to fear from a perſonal interview with Mr. Gilbert, I nevertheleſs unaccountably dreaded appearing before my benefactors, who in the interim frequently interrupted my meditations with their kind enquiries, and at whoſe repeated entreaties I was at length prevailed upon to leave my apartment and once more bear witneſs to the ſocial virtues which illuſtrated their characters.

"The

"The agitation of mind under which I laboured made them very readily credit my plea of indiſpoſition, which they the more particularly lamented, as it had deprived me of the pleaſure of ſympathizing with a gentleman, who, they informed me, had met with an incurable ſtab to his domeſtic happineſs, and whoſe innate goodneſs of heart rendered him doubly deſerving of the condolence of thoſe, who, having themſelves taſted of the cup of affliction, knew beſt how to adminiſter the balm of comfort to the wounded mind of the unmerited ſufferer.

"As I was extremely cautious of creating any ſuſpicion of my real character, I refrained from enquiring into many particulars which in any other ſituation would have particularly demanded my attention. I however learnt that Mr. Gilbert either was, or affected to be, much afflicted at my departure; that he had made every kind of enquiry concerning me, though hitherto without ſucceſs; and that deſpairing of his purpoſe, he had reſolved to devote the remainder of his life to ſolitude, endeavouring to ſeek in retirement a remedy for the mortification and diſappointment which by his villainy he had juſtly brought upon himſelf.

"I was moreover informed that Mr. Hilton had prevailed upon him, though reluctantly, to promiſe that he would paſs ſome little time with him occaſionally; a ſimilarity, in their misfortunes rendering ſuch an invitation natural, and the more ſo, as it promiſed ſome relaxation to the ſeverity of thoſe reflections which, imbittering the ſtreams of life, poiſoned the paſſing moments, and ſpread a malignancy prejudicial to the moſt innocent amuſements.

"The more I ruminated on his behaviour, the more I was aſtoniſhed— Whether to impute his conduct to affection, or the artful exertions of confirmed diſſimulation, I knew not. The latter motive appeared

to

to me the moſt probable; and yet, when I reflected on his former conduct, during the time I lived with him, I found but few, very few actions which entitled him to the appellation of a hypocrite—The longer I dwelt upon this ſcene of retroſpection, the more ſtrikingly did my memory furniſh me with inſtances in proof of his love and ſincerity..

"That he had betrayed, baſely betrayed the unhappy Charlotte would not admit of a doubt. Excluſive of the artleſs manner in which ſhe related her ſtory, ſhe could poſſibly have no intereſt in deceiving me. Falſhood may gain to itſelf a temporary advantage, but Truth alone comes directed to the heart.

"This was the ſtumbling-block which perpetually overthrew every advocate which partiality produced in his favour; this was the rock on which every flattering, every fond idea was doomed to inevitable deſtruction, and this it was which hurried me on (inſenſible to the dangers which ſurrounded me) to the experience of miſery, and to the familiarity with misfortune.

"Although I had luckily eſcaped a diſcovery on his firſt appearance amongſt us, I could not flatter myſelf that this would be the caſe again. Should I perſiſt in affecting an indiſpoſition every time, chance or inclination might induce him to repeat his viſit; a behaviour ſo extraordinary would naturally excite a ſuſpicion no ways favourable to my intention of remaining concealed, and at the ſame time would tend to a manifeſtation of my real character whereby I ſhould again ſubject myſelf to the dangers which by my elopement I had endeavoured to ſhun, and lay myſelf open to the power of a man whom I could not be prevailed upon to conſider in any other light than that of a Villain and a Betrayer.

"All night I buſied myſelf with thinking what ſtep

ſtep it would be the moſt to put in execution, in order thereby the more effectually to inſure to myſelf the preſervation of my liberty and the ſecurity of my peace. I could not reconcile to myſelf a continuance any longer with the Hilton family. The imminent hazard I ran of a diſcovery, and the opinion they had formed of Mr. Gilbert's honour and integrity, operated ſo powerfully in my breaſt, that I was reſolved at all events to expoſe myſelf to every inconvenience, rather than ſubmit to live in continual dread and apprehenſion of what I conſidered as a thouſand times more horrid than death itſelf.

" Terrified in this manner beyond expreſſion, I deſpairingly formed a reſolution of quitting this once happy ſpot, which I was wont to conſider as a kind of terreſtrial paradiſe; to quit it, with the fond view of enquiring if Fate had yet left in ſtore for me a ſingle bleſſing untainted with ſorrow, and that ſerved not as a prelude to ſome new misfortune.

" I could not however think of leaving my frineds and benefactors without firſt acquainting them with my motive for bidding them an everlaſting adieu. Gratitude, honour, humanity, all forbade it! I had already ſufficiently been the cauſe of their diſquietude. I found them as happy as peace, innocence, and virtue could make them; in poſſeſſion of health, in poſſeſſion of uninterrupted tranquillity: but how was I about to leave them?—— Sinking beneath the accumulated weight of ſorrows; their ſon dead, their health impaired, and their peace for ever deſtroyed! The proſpect was too horrid——Reaſon ſtaggered at the contraſt and Compaſſion bequeathed a tear to the memory of their afflictions.

" I was yet much at a loſs in what manner to diſcloſe to them my intention. A verbal declaration I plainly ſaw would be attended with numberleſs inconveniencies;

inconveniencies; nor would they be wanting to oppoſe ſuch a proceeding by every argument which love and friendſhip might direct them in the adminiſtration of. That my abſence would add to their uneaſineſs I had the greateſt and moſt powerful reaſon to ſuppoſe, and therefore I could not preſume that they would readily admit the neceſſity of ſuch a meaſure, however juſtifiable on the principles of honour and ſelf-preſervation.

"Perceiving therefore the difficulty attending an explanation of this ſort, I conjectured that it would be moſt prudent to leave behind me my reaſons in writing, which would ſerve at once to remove any prejudice a circumſtance ſo extraordinary might occaſion, and at the ſame time perſuade them of the impoſſibility of ever effecting a reconciliation between Mr. Gilbert and myſelf, convinced as I was of his criminality and the diſhonourable motives which actuated him in his ſearch after me.

"Having therefore the following day provided myſelf with what little neceſſaries I imagined my immediate occaſions would require, early on the ſucceeding morning, without imparting my reſolution to any one, I bade adieu to an habitation, where, in return for the moſt unexampled generoſity, I had nothing to bequeath but ſorrow, grief, and an extenſive train of unwholeſeme miſeries.

"Before I ſet out, however, I addreſſed the following letter to Mrs. Hilton, which I left in my bed-chamber, as knowing it would by that means get the more readily into her hands.

"Madam,

"With a heart overflowing with grief and oppreſſed with a load of misfortunes, permit me to expreſs my gratitude for the many favours which I owe to your partiality and generous hoſpitality.

"Doomed

" Doomed by fate to be a wanderer; wretched, " friendleſs, and forlorn, I am conſtrained by the " ſeverity of my deſtiny to relinquiſh every bleſſing " which your manſion once abundantly ſupplied, " and content myſelf with ſimply claiming an ex- " ertion of your pity, and a ſhare in your com- " paſſion.

" Extraordinary as my behaviour may appear, " believe me that I am at preſent actuated by what " has been hitherto the unvaried regulating princi- " ple of my life—a love of virtue, and a contempt " of the meanneſs and villainy of mankind.

" Naked and deſtitute, your charity relieved me; " with a tenderneſs equal to that of a parent you " indulged me, and left me nothing to lament but " the impoſſibility of ever having it in my power " to make you the grateful recompence your good- " neſs and uncommon benevolence merited.

" I would not wiſh to wound your ſenſibility by " recalling your attention to former circumſtances. " Yet—gracious heavens!—when I reflect on the " misfortunes my unlucky ſtars have given birth " to;——— when I revolve in my mind the evils " I have unwillingly entailed upon thoſe whom it " was my ſtudy as well as my duty to oblige, the " thought ſubdues the powers of Reaſon, and leaves " me a prey to ſenſations which at once amaze and " confound.

" I ſhould, Madam, be ill deſerving of your " friendſhip and the good opinion I flatter myſelf " you have hitherto entertained of me, ſhould I take " my leave without firſt acquainting you with a " ſecret which in a great meaſure will tend to un- " ravel the myſterious motives of my elopement, " and at the ſame time ſerve to give you ſome in- " ſight into a character which is no leſs unfortun- " nate than ſingular.

" Know

"Know then, Madam, I am the miſerable "woman whoſe misfortunes you are already ac- "quainted with, and whom, I am fearful, you "are unhappily prepoſſeſſed againſt from the artful "miſrepreſentations of a man who is a ſtain to his "generation—I mean Mr. Gilbert, whoſe wife I "once conſidered myſelf, till convinced of his vil- "lainy, I was conſtrained to ſeek for that repoſe in "the habitation of a ſtranger, which I could not "flatter myſelf with finding in the houſe of him "whoſe duty it was to procure it me.

"The improbability of my remaining long con- "cealed in a place where I might every hour ex- "pect a viſit from him, is the conſideration which "compels me on to my preſent undertaking. "I know the danger to which I am thereby ex- "poſed, but truſt that the rectitude of my intenti- "ons will ſo far plead in my favour as to mitigate "the ſeverity of cenſure, and ſecure me a place in "the eſteem and confidence of every friend and "lover of virtue.

"I am, Madam,

"Your unfortunate,

"LOUISA."

"Having diſpoſed of the above epiſtle in the manner before releated, with the utmoſt ſecrecy I departed; and taking the road to London, inſenſible to the dangers and inconveniences which my ſex and condition laid me open to, I journied on with as much ſpirits as could reaſonably be expected to actuate a mind like mine oppreſſed with the accumulated load of Misfortune, Grief, and Diſappointment."

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A Journey to Town. A new Acquaintance. The Face not always an Index of the Heart. Misfortune upon Misfortune. Guilt rewarded, and Innocence compelled to ſeek a Refuge from the Inhumanity of the World—in the Marſhalſea.

"I HAD ſcarcely proceeded a mile before I was overtaken by a ſmart country wench, the hilarity of whoſe countenance and ſpeaking ſenſibility of whoſe eyes ſeemed to expreſs in terms ſtronger than words a mind at reſt and a life unacquainted with affliction. The compariſon I made upon beholding her was far from proving advantageous to myſelf. The natural bloom of her cheeks, the laughing vivacity of her looks, and the eaſe and gaiety which marked her whole behaviour, indicated a happineſs ſo infinitely ſuperior to any thing I had ever experienced, that I almoſt envied her the felicity ſhe enjoyed, conſidering it as a proof of the injuſtice and partiality of the appointments and diſpenſations of Providence.

"With a ruſtic civility ſhe gave me the time of the day, and enquiring if I was going to London, offered to accompany me to that place, if agreeable to me. As the gloomy ſeverity of my thoughts required ſomewhat to amuſe them, I very readily accepted of her propoſal, and the more ſo from the conſideration that a female alone and unprotected is much more incapable of combating the wantonneſs and inhumanity of the world, than when mingling with the croud, however inconſiderable the aſſiſtance ariſing therefrom.

"She informed me that ſhe was born at no great diſtance and was going to Town, where ſhe was

was an entire ſtranger, with the intention of procuring a ſervice, her whole dependance upon which ſhe however ingenuouſly confeſſed was placed in a written recommendation given her by a Lady with whom ſhe had lived a conſiderable time, and who parted with her from no other conſideration then that of having *no farther occaſion for her.*

"I was greatly pleaſed with the ſincerity which ſignalized her character, and determin'd, if poſſible, to prevail upon her to continue at leaſt ſome days with me, with the deſire of learning whether or not the judgment I had formed of her was juſt; in order to effect which, I repreſented to her the dangers ſhe had to encounter from the natural barbarity of the world, and her ignorance of the wiles and artifices of mankind: I deſcibed to her the uncertainty of being immediately provided with a place equal to her wiſhes, and how much the leaſt indiſcretion would tend to fix an everlaſting blemiſh on her fame and reputation.

"Theſe admonitions failed not of apparently having their deſired weight. She thanked me for the trouble I was at in the deſcription, and aſſured me of ever making my advice the rule of her conduct.

"It was now time to think of procuring ſome refreſhment, which, as we had accompliſhed the better half of our journey, we reſolved to do the firſt opportunity which offered. It was not long before we came up to one of thoſe houſes of entertainment with which the environs of the metropolis ſo much abound, which we entered, and having recruited our ſpirits by partaking of a hearty breakfaſt, we prepared ourſelves for the remainder of our intended journey.

"In the courſe of our further walk I took occaſion to offer her a continuance with me upon our arrival in London until ſuch time as ſhe was better provided

provided for. This propoſal ſhe very readily and thankfully accepted, and we mutually congratulated ourſelves on an adventure which promiſed equal ſatisfaction to us both.

" My late worthy benefactors, not contented with the aſylum they had ſo generouſly afford me, would frequently force preſents upon me, which I (unwilling to increaſe the obligations I before laboured under) reluctantly accepted, and deteſting any impoſition on their good nature, received, merely through a fear of diſobliging them by a refuſal.

" Theſe tokens of their regard I now found the value of, and acting ſolely on the principles of ſelf-preſervation, promiſed myſelf from them a temporary triumph over the neceſſities of human nature, and the means of averting the threats of hunger and the cravings of immediate want.

" The day was not far ſpent when we arrived at the place of deſtination. As I was ſomewhat apprehenſive of a purſuit, I endeavoured to avoid any ill effects ariſing therefrom by houſing myſelf, together with my new acquaintance, as expeditiouſly as poſſible. My reflections, how much ſoever I aimed to ſtifle them, would be continually admoniſhing me of the affliction Mr. and Mrs. Hilton would ſuffer on account of my elopement : I even went ſo far as to wiſh I had not acted ſo precipitately. It was ſufficient, I would ſay to myſelf, to have deprived them of their ſon. Their treatment of me, a wanderer and a ſtranger, merited a far more grateful return than that of leaving them a prey to diſappointment and the horrors ariſing from the uncertainty of my fate. Perhaps, continued I, at this very moment they are bewailing my loſs! I have impiouſly planted daggers in the boſoms of my benefactors ; I have repleniſhed the fountain of their tears ; I have revived the memory of their ſuffering, and I have moſt ungenerouſly ſacrificed their happineſs (which it ought to

have

have been my greateſt pleaſure to promote) to a romantic pride, and, I fear, a falſe notion of delicacy, no leſs criminal than abſurd.

"Theſe cogitations, however foreign to the motives which influenced my conduct, would too often intrude themſelvs upon my peace, and interrupt every little ſatisfaction I might have otherwiſe enjoyed from the conſideration of having for a time eluded the ſearch of Mr. Gilbert, and the dangers of a diſcovery.

"Jenny, for ſuch was the name of my companion, perceiving me labouring under a depreſſion which it was impoſſible ſhould eſcape the penetration of the moſt unobſervant ſpectator, ſtrove to divert my thoughts by an aſſiduity which diſcovered an equal ſhare of ingenuity and good-nature; nor was ſhe entirely diſappointed in her intentions. Her ſurprize at the ſight of ſuch a prodigious maſs of buildings, and the ſimplicity of her queſtions, could not fail of exciting the riſibility of any one but the moſt obſtinate cynic, and in ſpite of the gloomy reflections which were ever ready to invade the moſt diſtant bleſſings of my repoſe, I was ſo far from being diſpleaſed with her enquiries, that I deduced conſiderable amuſement from her behaviour, which ſerved to diſperſe the melancholy that began to overwhelm me, and permitted me to partake with her in the innocent ſatisfaction which it was evident ſhe received from a ſucceſſion of objects, the ſight of which ſhe was, till then, totally unaccuſtomed to.

"A millener in the neighbourhood, with whom I had a ſlight acquaintance, and to whom I had long been a cuſtomer, was the perſon I depended upon to recommend me to a lodging; nor were my expectations diſappointed, as ſhe readily embraced an opportunity of obliging me; and as I had led her into a perſuaſion that Mr. Gilbert (with whoſe perſon

perſon ſhe was unacquainted) was dead, I ran no danger of a diſcovery by her means, and the more ſo, as ſhe conſidered her own intereſt as united to my approbation of her conduct.

"By her endeavours I was ſoon accommodated with an appartment in a genteel part of the town, which I was the more pleaſed with, as by a reſidence in a neighbourhood where I was but little known, I ran the leſs hazard of expoſing myſelf to the knowledge of Mr. Gilbert, whom I conſidered as my mortal and moſt inveterate enemy.

"Jenny appeared exceedingly pleaſed with her ſituation, and was remarkably attentive in fulfilling the duties of her ſtation. Her aſſiduity recommended her to my eſteem, and occaſioned me to treat her in a manner which departing from the ſeverity of ſervitude, raiſed her more immediately on the level of a companion.

"By the aſſiſtance of the perſon at whoſe recommendation I became poſſeſſed of the apartments I then occupied, I turned my watch and trinkets, for which I ſtood indebted to the generoſity of Mr. and Mrs. Hilton, into money. The ſum ariſing from thence I found to be far from inconſiderable, and ſuch as (if properly managed) would well ſupply me with the conveniencies of life, till Fate might point me out the means of procuring to myſelf a more permanent eſtabliſhment than that which aroſe from a pittance, which, though not altogether contemptible, was far from affording me a competency equal to my wants or my wiſhes.

"It was now upwards of three months ſince I had firſt been ſettled in my new lodging, and excluſive of the reflections which would occaſionally intrude themſelves upon my quiet, I was as agreeably ſituated as one ſo circumſtanced could in reaſon

expect

expect to be. It is true, I found myſelf as far diſtant as ever from the probability of procuring to myſelf an addition to my happineſs by means of a ſituation ſimilar to that I enjoyed with Mr. Hilton; nevertheleſs I was determined not to deſpair, but ſilently repoſing my dependence upon Providence, to await the diſpenſations of that power which had hitherto protected me from the aſſaults of ſhame and from the hand of danger.

"Reſigned to whatever might befall me, I patiently abided by this reſolution; and blind to the Fate which attended me, indifferently beheld the eve of that day which was doomed to plunge me into freſh affliction, and to increaſe the catalogue of my miſeries, already rendered copious by a life of trouble and a ſucceſſion of repeated calamities.

"The only amuſement, the gratification of which I indulged myſelf in, was that of the Theatres: from my youth I had inſenſibly imbibed a partiality for thoſe entertainments; and muſt confeſs, in ſpite of the powerful attacks of prejudice, that I deduced more ſolid and rational advantages from them, more excellent precepts and ſound morality, than in the moſt elaborate ſtudies of divines, caſuiſts, and metaphyſicians, who, too often, reaſon but to confound, and argue to perplex.

"One evening, returning from this my favourite amuſement, I was ſurprized to find Jenny abſent. Having made enquiry, I was informed that ſhe had departed ſoon after me, without leaving word where ſhe was going, or what time ſhe propoſed being back. Extraordinary as this circumſtance appeared, I was inclined to ſuppoſe that ſhe had by ſome accident miſtook her way, and impreſſed as I was with an opinion of her innocence waited in continual expectation of finding her make her appearance.

"Hour

"Hour after hour I continued in this hope; but perceiving no proſpect of her approach, towards morning, exceedingly uneaſy at her imprudence, I retired to bed: it was impoſſible to think of ſleeping, ſo much were my ſenſes employed in accounting for her conduct.

"Fatigued with watching and exhauſted with reflection, it was late in the day when I aroſe; but, good Heaven! what was my amazement when I found my bureau broke open, and all my little property a prey to an ungrateful wretch who had impoſed on me by a pretended ſanctity, and had adopted an artful behaviour merely with a view of impoſing upon my credulity and profiting by my generoſity! It is impoſſible to deſcribe what I ſuffered on the occaſion —My Reaſon ſtaggered, and all my faculties were loſt in a whirlwind of paſſion.

"I no longer placed my confidence in appearances: the late diſappointment to my hopes taught me the truth of that proverb which ſays, "*A ſmiling* "*face may conceal a wicked heart*;"—and I was determined in future to be leſs liberal in an extenſion of my friendſhip and aſſiſtance, leſt I ſhould again meet with the ungrateful recompence I had already but too much experinced.

"The ſprightlineſs of her looks, and the affected ſimplicity of her words and actions, had been the means of perſuading me into a belief of the ſincerity of her profeſſions. Deceived by this circumſtance, it is no wonder that the mortification ariſing from ſo manifeſt a diſappointment ſhould have borne down every exertion of Reaſon, and left me a victim to the horrors of deſpair and the aggravated bitterneſs of torturing reflections.

"To increaſe my uneaſineſs I was conſiderably indebted to the miſtreſs of the houſe, to whom I related my misfortune, and ingenuouſly imparted the unpromiſing

unpromiſing ſtate of my finances, now reduced to their loweſt ebb; and what was infinitely worſe, thus unhappily reduced without the certain proſpect of receiving any advantage from time or the ordinary diſpoſitions of chance.

"She appeared to ſympathize with me in my loſs, and aſſured me that there was yet left a probability of my recovering my property. As for the triſle for which I ſtood indebted to her, treating it as a matter of no conſequence, ſhe deſired me not to afflict myſelf on that head, as ſhe never intended troubling me abot it; — and to convince me that ſhe was ſincere in what ſhe ſaid, that ſame evening I was arreſted at her ſuit, and with the utmoſt expedition conveyed to the MARSHALSEA!"

CHAP. XIII,

In which the Reader is introduced within the Walls of a Priſon. An uncommon Character. The Hiſtory of a Philoſophical Itinerant. Advice from a Father to a Son. A tragical Adventure, and the Impropriety of laying up a Treaſure on Earth.

"I Began now to ſuppoſe that Fate had done its worſt, and that I might reaſonably expect a calm after the many ſtorms which I had ſo lately experienced; I found there was no dependence to be placed upon mankind, but that like ſavages they mutually thirſted for each other's deſtruction, and unmindful of the duties of Chriſtianity, delighted in cruelty, fraud, and diſſimulation.

"Thoſe to whom misfortune has rendered familiar the horrors of a priſon, will eaſily conjecture what muſt have been my feelings upon entering theſe regions of miſery—Obliged indiſcriminately to herd with the moſt abandoned of my own ſex, and ſubject

to

to the brutality of the other, exiſtence became a burthen, and nothing but ſome little remains of religion hindered me from actually putting a final period at once to my life and my misfortunes.

"Uſe, however, in a very ſhort time reconciled me to the place and its inhabitants; and how much ſoever their actions taught me to deſpiſe them in a moral light, I nevertheleſs, conſidering them as my fellow-ſufferers, lamented with them our mutual croſſes, and was liberal in affording them every aſſiſtance which my contracted circumſtances impowered me in the execution of.

"A perſon who had unfortunately the ill luck of being confined within the ſame contracted limits as myſelf, had particularly and unaccountably attracted my attention. He was rather in the decline of life, yet, notwithſtanding the attacks of time, manifeſted an outward gaiety which rendered him ſuperior to his ſufferings, and adminiſtered the balm of comfort to him amidſt the horrors of impriſonment and the ſeverity of his fate.

"I had hitherto been ſo conſtantly diſappointed in my endeavours at reading the countenance, that I, in fact, began to deſpair of ever meeting with one whoſe mind did not in the end contradict the evidence of his face. Something however which I could not account for made me anxious to procure an acquaintance with a character which (if appearances ſpoke true) promiſed to afford me no inconſiderable ſhare of amuſement; and as the motive which induced me to this meaſure was in itſelf perfectly innocent, I was truly indifferent as to any conſequences that might reſult from a connection ſo haſtily formed.

"My expectation of finding ſomething in him to divert me in my confinement was by no means diſappointed. I diſcovered him to be poſſeſſed of much of that craft which, generally ſpeaking is denominated

a knowledge of the world; notwithſtanding which, and the levity that marked his appearance, I found him in many particulars maſter of a depth of judgment, and poſſeſſed of talents, which, if properly applied in any other ſtation of life, inſtead of tending to the purpoſe of corrupting the heart and vitiating the firſt principles of rectitude, would have conferred everlaſting honour on himſelf, and conduced to the general ſervice of mankind.

" As he was one day amuſing me with a relation of circumſtances equally new and entertaining, I requſted him to favour me with a regular ſketch of his hiſtory. After ſome little heſitation he appeared willing to gratify my curioſity, and having ſomewhat recollected himſelf, began as follows.

The HISTORY *of a* PHILOSOPHICAL ITINERANT.

" There is hardly a queſtion (ſays a late writer) " I cannot more readily anſwer than that of telling " any one *who I am.*"—' In *that* particular, Madam, " my manner of thinking ſo perfectly correſponds " with his, that I was for ſome time in a ſtate of " uncertainty, whether I ought not altogether to " have refuſed your requeſt, merely with a view of " avoiding the aukward ſituation of biographical and " genealogical confeſſion.

' A hiſtory, like a portrait, ſhould not ſimply ' preſent us with beauties; it ſhould likewiſe convey ' to us the imperfections of him it repreſents. The ' boaſt of anceſtry, the pride of lineal honours, and ' the pompous diſplay of heraldry, if blazoned on the ' ſhield of falſhood, or uncompanied with intrinſic ' merit, ſerve only to give us an idea of the weakneſs ' and vanity of human nature, and the folly of at- ' tempting to deduce a conſquence from circum-

' ſtances

'ſtances which ſhould alone excite the bluſh of 'ſhame and the reproach of reaſon.

'Such, Madam, being my ſentiments, you will 'expect that in the following narrative I depart 'from all reſerve, and truly, candidly, and preciſely 'preſent you with the incidents of a life which has 'been no leſs remarkable for extraordinary adven-'tures than for its viciſſitudes and metamorphoſes.

'I was born in a garret within the purlieus of St. 'Giles's, and from my very *high* birth, it was 'ſhrewdly conjectured that I ſhould come to be a '*great man*. How far this prediction was verified 'will be determined in the following hiſtory. My 'father was one of thoſe clay-coloured gentry, the 'fluctuation of whoſe finances depends upon the 'increaſe or decreaſe of the bills of mortality; he 'being Sexton and Grave-digger to the pariſh 'which boaſted the honour of my birth.

'The education I received from this worthy 'parent and preceptor was ſuch as ſcarcely entitled 'me to be vain. Reading and ſpelling I learnt in 'Farthing-alley; arithmetic I acquired by ſtudying 'the game of cribbage; and I attainded a knowledge 'of the claſſics by attending the neighbouring ſem-'inaries, which, like the Athenian ſchools, had been 'the nurſury of *heroes* and *orators*.

'However, though I am not greatly indebted to 'my father for ſcholaſtic knowledge, I am never-'theleſs ſufficiently ſo for a regulation of my *morals*. "My ſon (ſaid he to me one day) liſten to the ad-"vice of thy father!—The words my tongue ſhall "ſpeak are deduced from Reaſon and Experience, "and by attending to them, thou ſhalt avoid thoſe "evils ſo frequently awaiting the unwiſe and impo-"litic. If thy neceſſities ſhould compel thee to "live by thy talent of Cunning, or, in other words, "what the world denominates—*thieving*, be careful

" to do it with ſecrecy, for the crime does not ſo
" much conſiſt in the commiſſion as in the detecti-
" on.—Lay a perpetual bridle upon thy mouth, nor,
" upon any pretence whatever, betray the confi-
" dence repoſed in thee. Shouldſt thou at an evil
" hour fall into the hands of juſtice, be ſure never
" to diſcover thy accamplices, unleſs thou canſt
" thereby inſure to thyſelf a pardon; in which caſe,
" I ſay, Honour muſt undergo a temporary ſub-
" miſſion to the neceſſities of *ſelf-preſervation.*—
" Perjury, my ſon, is a foul crime, and never to be
" juſtified, unleſs upon the principles of *gain:* it is
" the villain's laſt reſource, the deſtruction of all
" law and confidence, and immediately ſubverſive
" of every dictate of *Religion*; therefore I caution
" thee carefully to avoid it, unleſs thou canſt render
" it ſubſervient to thy intereſt.—I fancy I need not
" explain to thee the enormity of the guilt attendant
" on the commiſſion of Murder. It is a ſin unmatch-
" ed in the eyes of God and Man, and what no mo-
" tive ſhould be a temptation to: however, if
" *buſineſs* cannot be carried on without it, its cri-
" minality may be extenuated by a few timely re-
" flections on the warmth of youth, and obſtinacy
" of the defunct, and by the natural imputation of
" *ſelf-defence.*—But in no wiſe be cruel. Murder
" when exaggerated by wantonneſs and cruelty is a
" double ſin, and which ſo ſhocks the tenderneſs of
" my nature, that I am at a loſs for terms by which
" to attempt its juſtification."

' In this manner did my worthy father caution
' me againſt the vices of the times; in this manner
' did he attend to the cultivation of my morals; and
' the ſame evening took me with him to aſſiſt him
' in ſtealing a dead body, which he had promiſed to
' a celebrated anatomical lecturer as a ſubject for
' diſſection.

At

'At midnight, my Father and myſelf, together 'with an aſſiſtant, ſallied forth for the place of action, 'and found no difficulty in poſſeſſing ourſelves of the 'corpſe, which we bore away in triumph, and had 'already in idea diſpoſed of the profits, when turn-'ing down *Windmill-ſtreet*, an unlucky dog, the 'ſagacity of whoſe ſmell awakened his appetite, 'aſſaulted my unfortunate Father with that ſavage 'ferocity ſo natural to thoſe animals, that he was 'fain to relinquiſh his prize and betake himſelf to his 'heels, with his aſſiſtant, who was no leſs eager to 'effect his retreat than his maſter.

'The noiſe which this accident occaſioned gave 'an alarm to the watchmen, who immediately 'purſued the runaways, but without ſucceſs. Hav-'ing however ſeized upon me, the eſcorted me, 'together with the dead body, to the watch-houſe.

'The Conſtable of the night, who happened to 'be one of thoſe penetrating beings who can ſee 'through a mill-ſtone, and was I ſuppoſe, doubly 'exaſperated at being diſturbed out of his ſleep, 'reſuming his magiſterial dignity, ordered me to 'approach his chair, which I did, trembling through 'fear and apprehenſion of puniſhment.

"So you dog (ſays this humane officer) eh! — "what, we have caught you at laſt? Not content "with robbing the living, you muſt complete your "iniquity by a diabolical and ſacrilegious attack "upon the dead! Come, confeſs the truth, you "raſcal, or you ſhall be hang'd. Who are your "accomplices, you ſcoundrel? *Curl-pated Harry* "I warrant is one, and *Left-handed Hugh*, I ſup-"poſe, the other. Confeſs; you had beſt, or you "ſhall find that the *repreſentative of majeſty* is not "to be jeſted with."

'I now began for the firſt time to perceive the 'rules which my Father had laid down for the re-

'gulation of my conduct in a proper light. I found 'the neceſſity Honour was in of ſubmitting to the 'prudence of *ſelf-preſervation*; and I accordingly 'fulfilled his admonition by impeaching him and 'his accomplice, who were ſhortly after taken, and 'on the fulleſt evidence convicted and ſentenced for 'tranſportation.

'Having thus loſt my Father, and being only in 'my fourteenth year, I found myſelf caſt on the wide 'world without a probability of providing for my-'ſelf, otherwiſe than by depending upon a precarious 'ſubſiſtance ariſing form the alms of the charitable. 'This method of procuring an exiſtence proving in-'ſufficient and diſagreeable, determined me to try 'my fortune by ſervitude; I accordingly made en-'quiry for a maſter; nor was it long before my in-'clination in this reſpect was indulged.

'You may probably, Madam (continued he) 'remember an old blind ſoldier, who, ſome years 'ſince, ſold ballads under the wall of *Privy Garden*. 'This was the perſon in whoſe ſervice I had firſt 'the honour to ſtudy the duty of a domeſtic. My 'employment, though not abundantly honourable, 'was however exceedingly eaſy, as the principal part 'thereof conſiſted in leading my maſter to and from 'the ſcene of his labours. As many, induced by the 'novelty of his appearance, preſented him with 'benefactions unſolicited on his part, he was 'thereby not only enabled to live in a manner ſup-'erior to the generality of thoſe preſumers upon 'Providence, but was likewiſe impowered occaſion-'ally to ſet aſide a trifle for a future proviſion.

'My readineſs to oblige, and my attention to the 'duties of my employment, ſoon procured me the 'confidence and eſteem of my ſuperior, by whom I 'was greatly careſſed and intruſted with the key of 'his treaſures. This, however, in the end coſt him

'dear,

'dear, as the devil, who owed me a grudge, ceaſed 'not to perſecute me, until he had confirmed me in 'the reſolution of making myſelf maſter of his 'wealth, and bidding him an everlaſting adieu.

'As a determination of this ſort is ſeldom made 'long before it is carried into execution, I the ſame 'night found myſelf eaſed of the load of ſervitude, 'and actually worth ſeventeen pounds and upwards. 'My emancipation was however attended with its 'inconveniencies, as I was in perpetual fear of a diſ-'covery, which I ran in great danger of from the 'peculiarity of the circumſtance, which intereſted 'many in behalf of my old employer, who would 'gladly have puniſhed me for my breach of truſt, 'and the violation of the confidence repoſed in me.

'Perhaps it may be demanded, how I could re-'concile this conduct with the principles of honeſty? 'Be it remembered, I took not from the needy and 'the fatherleſs, but from him who was capable of 'providing a ſupply. A deprivation of ſight is a draft 'from Heaven in favour of the bearer, drawn upon 'every good Chriſtian of whatever denomination. 'My late maſter knew this well, and I believe would 'not have ſacrificed his profits for every advantage 'to be gained by a recovery of his ſight or the reno-'vation of his youth. Theſe circumſtances I well 'conſidered, and having maturely weighed them in 'mind, I concluded it beſt for him to lay up his 'treaſure in heaven, where neither moth corrupts, 'nor thieves break through and ſteal.'

CHAP. XVI.

The Hiſtory of a Philoſophical Itinerant continued. Honeſty the beſt Policy. A ſudden Metamorphoſis. A Mirror for Empiriciſm. A whimſical Legacy, and an unexpected Cataſtrophe.

'AS I was in continual dread of being diſcovered, I expeditiouſly furniſhed myſelf with a ſecond hand ſuit of cloaths, and with the aſſiſtance of a ſmart ſcratch wig made an excurſion into the country. Here I met with a tribe of Gypſies, in whoſe company I gladly enliſted, having previouſly under-gone the uſual ceremony of initiation, the ſolemnity of which well correſponds with the antiquity of ſo venerable an order.

'I was now in full poſſeſſion of every pleaſure my fancy could hope for. My philoſophy met with that indulgence it had ſo long ſought the gratification of, and led me to moralize on the abſurdity of being for ever confined to *one* ſpot or ſtation in life. The dull repetition of unintereſting politicks, the capricious whimſies and fantaſtical changes of taſte, the defective ſchemes of fooliſh projectors, all now appeared to my eye in that light which Reaſon ever draws when ſhe wiſhes to expoſe human abſurdities.

In this merry ſociety I remained almoſt two years, during which time it would be impoſſible to relate or enumerate the various cheats and impoſitions we practiſed on the unwary and credulous; and yet ours was an innocent kind of impoſition, as we ſent every one away much happier than he came, by a neverfailing preſcription, which was that of invariably purſuing a conſtant prediction of ſucceſs, however improbable, or indeed impoſſible ſuch a prophecy appeared in the eye of Reaſon.

'Like

'Like moſt other communities, ours was ſubject 'to the revolutions and viciſſitudes of Chance, which 'about this time we fatally experienced, and the 'more ſo, as it was the means of diſperſing our 'little ſociety, and deſtroying an union which pro-'miſed to be productive of the moſt ſolid and ratio-'nal advantages.

'One of our fraternity having been ſent for by 'the lady of a juſtice of the peace in the neighbour-'hood (who, notwithſtanding ſhe had already paſſed 'her grand climacteric, was yet deſirous of having 'her fortune told) could not keep his fingers from 'meddling with a gold watch, which unfortunately 'attracted his eyes, whilſt he was liberally flattering 'the old Lady with the hopes of outliving her 'huſband and burying her grandchildren.

'The tranſport ſhe felt at ſo joyful a piece of 'news, did not however hinder her from immedi-'ately miſſing her repeator, which was the more 'valuable for its weight than its faſhion, and had 'been a favourable piece of family furniture ever 'ſince the Revolution.

'No ſooner was ſhe certified of her loſs, than 'her ſuſpicion very naturally fell upon the ſeer, who 'was examined, and the watch being found upon 'him, in ſpite of his proteſtations of innocence he 'was by virtue of a warrant from his worſhip com-'mitted to gaol.

'Not contented with a proſecution which promiſed 'him every ſatisfaction which Juſtice could reaſona-'bly require from the unhappy culprit, he was de-'termined to be revenged upon our whole brother-'hood; for which end he publicly declared an inten-'tion of enforcing the vagrant laws againſt us; and 'to convince us he was in earneſt, that very day 'actually ſent ſeveral of our gang to accompany the 'unfortunate delinquent who was the original cauſe 'of his worſhip's diſpleaſure.

'This ſevere procceding of the juſtice occaſioned 'a ſeparation, which I the more particularly lament-'ed, as I was ignorant in what manner to procure 'a livelihood, having ſo long been accuſtomed to 'lead a life of eaſe, that I could not eaſily reconcile 'myſelf to the idea of ſervitude, or indeed a ſtate 'of dependence of any kind.

'Notwithſtanding the intervention of near two 'years, I was fearful that the circumſtance which 'induced me to quit my old Maſter was not yet in 'every reſpect forgot; however, as the kind of life 'which I had led ſince that period had greatly alter-'ed me, I flattered myſelf that I ſhould be unknown 'in the metropolis, which I determined (as I was 'much diſguſted with the country) ſhould be for a 'time the ſcene of my actions and the theatre of 'of my labours.

'With this reſolution I haſtened back to London; 'and having purchaſed a ſtool, bruſh, and blacking-'ball, humbly commenced jappanner of ſhoes in one 'of the moſt frequented parts of the town. My ſuc-'ceſs greatly exceeding my expectation I was ena-'bled to live comfortably; and notwithſtanding I 'had many rivals in trade, I nevertheleſs roſe great-'ly ſuperior to them all.

'Amongſt the many whom I had the honour to 'rank as my cuſtomers, was an old Gentleman who 'often diverted himſelf with the ingenious devices 'I was perpetually inventing for his amuſement, 'and in whoſe eſtimation by ſuch means I had 'made a conſiderable progreſs.

'To attempt a deſcription of him would put my 'abilities to the bluſh, ſo infinitely would the por-'trait fall ſhort of the original.

'He was extremely regular in his viſits,—and the 'aſſiduity I diſcovered to oblige him was ſure to ex-'tort a ſmile from him, which I received with

'more

'more ſatisfaction than I did his money, as the 'one was a complement to my talents, whereas the 'other was only the juſt fruits of my induſtry.

'To my great diſappointment I one morning 'miſſed him; which I was the more uneaſy at, as 'I had perceived him the day before uncommonly 'dejected, and entirely diveſted of his uſual ſpirits, 'which I had been anxious to promote by various 'innocent artifices, but unfortunately without ef-'fect.

'I very naturally imputed his abſence to an in-'diſpoſition, nor did the event wrong my judgment. 'Three days afterwards I received a meſſage from 'him, deſiring my attendance at his apartments; 'which ſummons I immediately obeyed, and, as I 'expected, found him extended on his bed feveriſh 'and almoſt inſenſible.

'The inſtant I approached him a languid ſmile 'diffuſed itſelf over his features; and after viewing 'me ſome time with attention, he addreſſed me 'nearly as follows:

"The remembrance of the many pleaſant mo-"ments I owe to your ingenuity and ſolicitude to "pleaſe, has been the occaſion of my at preſent "ſending for you. You may probably not be the "worſe for it; moſt likely, much better: this "however will entirely depend upon yourſelf, and "the uſe you make of my friendſhip and advice, "and which will be the only means of determining "the event. A life devoted to ſtudy ſeldom ter-"minates without being productive of ſome diſco-"very beneficial to mankind, and advantageous to "the ſcientific mind whom perſeverence leads to "inveſtigate the ſecrets of Nature, and to penetrate "into the occult myſteries which lie hid from the "reſearches of the vulgar.

"Of all ſtudies perhaps Phyſic is the moſt dif-

"ficult

" ficult. The barbarities of Cuſtom, the prejudi-
" ces of Education, and the ignorance and obſtinacy
" of modern practitioners, all ſerve to bring into
" diſrepute a ſcience, which, if conducted on the
" laws of Reaſon, would not only immortalize the
" profeſſor, but bid defiance at once to the united
" powers of Pain, Death, and Diſeaſe.

" Mankind, no longer terrified with apprehenſi-
" ons of ſickneſs, would regain their primitive
" vigour; their robuſt conſtitution, the manlineſs
" of feature, and the length of years which ſo emi-
" nently diſtinguiſhed the partiarchs and heroes of
" the firſt ages.

" It would not become me to ſound my own
" praiſes, nor ought I to be accuſed of Vanity in
" ſaying, that my life has not been entirely miſpent.
" The tireſome days, the reſtleſs nights, and the
" perturbations of mind I have experienced from a
" ſevere and unvaried application to ſtudy, have
" not gone in every meaſure unrewarded. It is true,
" I have not thereby accumulated a princely for-
" tune as many have done; nor can I be ſaid to
" die poor, ſeeing I am in poſſeſſion of ſecrets,
" which, if properly publiſhed, will inrich my heir,
" and prove the admiration of Poſterity.

" As I have no children, I know no one more
" deſerving of my friendſhip than yourſelf.——To
" *your* care, then, I think beſt to recommend my pa-
" pers; they are a treaſure of the utmoſt importance;
" when you are informed of their value, you will be
" ſenſible of the extent of my regard, and be enabled
" to paſs the remainder of your life in a manner
" which will ſet you above the contempt of the
" world, and the *inſolence of office.*"

' I thanked him for his good opinion of me, but
' at the ſame time expreſſed my aſtoniſhment that
' he did not exert his abilities in favour of himſelf,

' and

'and endeavour to preſerve a life which promiſed 'to be of ſo much advantage to the community at 'large.

'He however ſtopped me ſhort by a philoſophi- 'cal argument on the nature and properties of 'thought, and its operation on the human body. 'An intenſity of ſtudy he aimed to demonſtrate 'ſapped the foundation of health, and overtherew 'the whole animal ſyſtem; that the faculties of the 'ſoul regulated the conſtitution of the body, which 'was only well in proportion to the ſtrength or 'weakneſs of the more rational part; and that as 'to himſelf,—that he was yet in a ſtate of exiſtence 'was owing to a noſtrum of his own invention, 'which powerfully combating every diſeaſe incident 'to mortality, had hitherto preſerved a life worn out 'with care, anxiety, and ſtudious application.

'He moreover confeſſed, that he was enabled to 'extend his being yet to a conſiderable length by ſi- 'milar means with thoſe he had before practiſed; 'but as the advantages ariſing from ſuch a circum- 'ſtance would not prove ſufficient to compenſate for 'the pains of a miſerable exiſtence, he thought it 'moſt adviſeable to let his diſeaſe take a regular 'courſe, as it was impoſſible that he ſhould ſurvive 'long (unaſſiſted by medicine) the attacks of ſuch a 'complication of diſorders as thoſe under which he 'laboured.

'Curious to aſcertain the virtues of the ſpecific 'he ſo particularly recommended to my notice, I 'ſtrove to perſuade him once more to avail himſelf 'of the means Providence had put in his power (no 'doubt for his miraculous preſervation) and con- 'tinue ſomewhat longer a life which was of ſuch 'immediate importance to the welfare of his fellow- 'creatures, and to the enlightning of the phyſical 'world.

'Greatly

'Greatly moved by my entreaties, he at length 'condeſcended to live ſome little time longer; for 'which purpoſe he deſired me to hand him a ſmall 'phial that ſtood upon an eminence hard by, and 'which contained the wonderful *panacea* that was 'to produce what I ſo much deſired, and in whoſe 'praiſes he had been ſo warm and eloquent.

'My expectation of ſeeing ſome *extraordinary* 'effects from an adminiſtration of this noſtrum, 'was by no means diſappointed. Mixing a few 'drops in ſome water, he with the utmoſt compo-'ſure ſwallowed it; and whilſt I was watching to 'obſerve his eyes regain their primitive luſtre, to 'my unſpeakable ſurprize he cloſed them in ever-'laſting darkneſs!

'Although I had no great reaſon to congratulate 'myſelf on the attainment of a profeſſion which 'had proved ſo fatal in the firſt inſtance, yet, as 'few Phyſicians ſwallow their own preſcriptions, I 'was perfectly eaſy, and poſſeſſing myſelf of his 'papers I departed for the preſent, and haſtened 'home to my own habitation.

'Upon inſpecting the treaſure, which according 'to the doctor's account was to exalt me above the 'contempt of the world, I found, amongſt many 'others equally curious,—a receipt for the cure of 'Kibe Heels;—an infallible method of taking ſtains 'out of Mahogany;—the plan of a machine for 'docking of Horſes upon a new conſtruction; and— 'the moſt approved method for training of Poin-'ters.

'Theſe acquiſitions, though no doubt valuable, 'were however ſuch as promiſed to be but of little 'ſervice to me. I ſhould have been much more 'pleaſed had he bequeathed me the contents of his 'ward-robe, or even a ſingle ſuit of mourning, 'than to have been made maſter of the united phy-

'ſical

'ſical knowledge of Eſculapius, Paracelſus, and the 'whole train of empirical mendicants ancient or 'modern.

'The hurry I had been in to ſecure this myſti-'cal repoſitory, gave me no time to acquaint the 'people of the houſe with the misfortune which had 'befel the honeſt doctor. Having therefore now 'ſomewhat ſatisfied the violence of my curioſity, 'in reſpect to the nature and contents of ſo whim-'ſical a legacy, I reſolved to return and unfold to 'them the cataſtrophe of his fate. With this inten-'tion I made all the expedition I poſſibly could 'back, where I no ſooner arrived than I was ſeized 'and hurried before a neighbouring magiſtrate on 'ſuſpicion of having contibuted to his death by the 'aid of Poiſon, and of exaggerating the guilt of 'murder by the addition of a robbery.

'It availed but little that I knew myſelf innocent 'of the crime laid to my charge; my poverty was 'enough to render me ſuſpected; in conſequence 'of which, without a ſingnle fact againſt me which 'could any ways amount to a probability, or being 'allowed permiſſion of offering any thing in my 'own defence, unpitied, unexamined, and unheard I 'was committed to Newgate, and my proſecutor 'bound over to appear againſt me at the enſuing 'ſeſſions at the Old Baily.'

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

In which the Hiſtory of a Philoſophical Itinerant is concluded. An honourable Acquittal. The fatal Effects of chirurgical Operations when performed by an unſkilful Practitioner. A modeſt Apology for Authorſhip. A Conference with a Bookſeller. A dramatic Attempt, and a litterary Damnation.

'IN this habitation of miſery I had full time for Reflection. I curſed the doctor as the cauſe of my misfortunes; and as I could not flatter myſelf with meeting more candour in the face of a jury than that which I lately experienced before the magiſtrate, I prepared myſelf for death with a decency and reſignation becoming a perſon in my unhappy ſituation, and waited patiently the event with the fortitude and magnanimity of an innocent ſufferer.

'The former ſcenes of my life would however occaſionally intrude themſelves upon my thought. The impeachment of my father and the robbery of my old maſter gave me no ſmall cauſe of uneaſineſs, and I conſidered the evil which had now befallen me, as a judgment for my former impiety and ingratitude; and that having eſcaped the puniſhment I deſerved for crimes I really *had* committed, I was now going to ſuffer an ignominious death for a matter in which I was in every reſpect guiltleſs.

'The Seſſions being at hand, I was one of the firſt on the liſt of thoſe which were called down to take their trial, and heard my indictment read with the greateſt compoſure, to which I truly pleaded "*Not Guilty.*" The proſecutor related to the Court the circumſtance of my viſit to the deceaſed; his ſudden death ſubſequent thereunto,

'the

'the various ſymptoms of poiſon diſcoverable on 'examining him, and that ſeveral *valuable* papers 'and memorandums had been found in my poſſeſ-'ſion, of which there remained the moſt incontro-'vertible proof of their being the property of the 'Doctor.

'My defence conſiſted of a *plain unvarniſhed tale*, 'which gained upon the heart more by reaſon of its 'ſimplicity than its ingenuity. I deſcribed the man-'ner of my firſt acquaintance with the deceaſed, 'and that the viſit I then paid him was at his own 'particular requeſt, which was confirmed by the 'teſtimony of the perſon who delivered me the 'meſſage. The abſurdity of ſuppoſing that a per-'ſon (guilty of a crime ſimilar to that with which 'I ſtood charged) would voluntarily reſign himſelf 'up to danger, I particularly dwelt upon; and 'concluded my defence with ſubmitting it to the 'judgment of the court, whether the papers were 'of themſelves ſufficiently valuable to induce a rea-'ſonable being to the commiſſion of a cool preme-'diated murder?

'The jury having heard my defence were una-'nimous in my favour, and I was (much to my 'own ſatisfaction) acquitted; and once more caſt 'upon the world, friendleſs, forlorn, and truly 'deſtitute.

'It was in vain to attempt reſuming my old em-'ploy, after the blemiſh my character had endur-'ed; for howſoever ill-grounded the charge was 'againſt me, however manifeſt my innocence and 'inferior the ſtation of life I poſſeſſed, my cuſ-'tomers to a man forſook me, and I experienced 'for the firſt time how immediately neceſſary it is 'even to avoid the ſuſpicion of acting criminally, 'when a man is dependent on the world for the 'means of a ſubſiſtance.

'As

'As I had loſt ſo much by my acquaintance 'with the doctor, I thought it but reaſonable that 'he ſhould contribute towards my future ſupport in 'another ſituation. I was therefore determined to 'commence Quack, of which I had by this time 'conceived a tolerable idea, and for which charac-'ter I conſidered myſelf as excellently modelled.—'A volubility of tongue, a command of counte-'nance, and a bluſhleſs effrontery,—the moſt ma-'terial requiſites for maintaining a phyſical impor-'tance, I knew myſelf poſſeſſed of, and made not 'the leaſt doubt of reaching the ſummit of the 'profeſſion.

'Diſcloſing to this end my plan to an old neigh-'bour, he not only beſtowed his commendation up-'on it, but offered likewiſe to furniſh me with ne-'ceſſaries; without which it had been impoſſible to 'have put in practice a ſcheme, which, however 'flattering in idea, would, confined to thoſe limits 'have ultimately proved exceedingly unprofitable.

'With the aſſiſtance of this quondam acquain-'tance, I was ſpeedily ſupplied with a ruſty ſuit of 'Black, full trimmed; a mourning ſword and a tye 'wig, which however antique, conferred an air of 'conſequence on the wearer, and ſerved at once as 'a confirmation of his wiſdom, and to determine 'the extent of his erudition and profeſſional capa-'city.

'I conſidered that whilſt Phyſic, like every other 'ſcience, was peſtered with pretenders, it would be 'abſurd to follow the dull beaten track of our fore-'fathers; that rules were fetters to fancy, and re-'gularity the offspring of ignorance. Under this 'conviction I was determined to ſtrike into a new 'path—Allum, chalk, brine, and brick-duſt, were 'the principal ingredients in my medicinal 'compoſitions; and as I knew the FAITH of a

'patient

'patient to be the moſt eſſential operative, I eſti-
'mated the nature of other means as truly indif-
'ferent.

'Whilſt I was contented to act as a phyſician,
'which I did for ſeveral years, my ſucceſs was far
'from inconſiderable; but the moment I com-
'menced Surgeon and Oculiſt my high expectati-
'ons vaniſhed, and all my conſequential ideas im-
'perceptibly mouldered away. A pain in the fin-
'ger was certain to terminate in an amputation of
'the arm. If I attempted to couch for the cata-
'ract a total blindneſs was the conſequeuce. Nay,
'even the application of a bliſter, in ſpite of all my
'care, has been known to be productive of a mortifi-
'cation.— So fatal was the courſe of my practice!

'Theſe accidents ſo frequently happening, terrifi-
'ed me from all chirurgical notions, and truly diſ-
'ſatisfied with my new adopted character, I deſ-
'pairingly exchanged my tye-wig for a bag; — re-
'nounced Galen in favour of Apollo; and in the
'room of electuaries, juleps, and cataplaſms, I com-
'menced Author, and attended to the manufactory
'of ſongs and ſonnets, anagrams and epigrams, acroſ-
'tics, riddles, odes, and conundrums.

'This profeſſion, if not more honourable, was at
'leaſt more harmleſs than the other, and I pleaſed
'myſelf with reflecting on the exchange. It is
'true I did not find the ſame profits ariſing from
'my talents in a poetical as in a phyſical character;
'however I hoped in time to be enabled in that ſta-
'on to procure myſelf a ſufficiency, whereby to a-
'vert the attacks of hunger and the dangers of po-
'verty.

'As I had not much reaſon as yet to be over
'pleaſed with my ſucceſs as a writer of verſe, I was
'determined to try my abilities at proſe. The firſt
'work I finiſhed in this way was a novel, with
'which, full of ſpirits, I repaired to a Bookſeller

'Already

'Already I began in idea to count over the profits, 'and was even vain enough to hope I ſhould be a- 'ble to prevail upon him to advance me a ſufficiency to purchaſe a new pair of breeches, of which 'I began to ſtand in no ſmall need.

'The moment this midwife to the muſes made 'his appearance, I preſented him with my manuſcript.' "Here, Sir," ſaid I, "I have brought "you a treaſure. This, Mr. Quarto, is none of "your modern flimſey performances.—No, Sir; I "flatter myſelf you will find it to abound with elegance of diction, purity of ſtyle, ſtrength of reaſoning, originality of character, invention, and "pathetic deſcription."

'I was however under an error in ſuppoſing that 'he would impliciately ſubmit to my judgement 'without farther confirmation, to ſatisfy any doubts 'that might ariſe in his mind as to the real merit 'of the work: this indeed was far from his intention;—deſiring me therefore to leave the manuſcript, 'he told me I might call again in a day or two, when 'he would *favour* me with his opinion.

'Agreeable to his requeſt, I attended him again 'in the courſe of the week; and trembling for fear 'of the event, I was uſhered into a parlour, where 'it was not long before Mr. Quarto made his appearance.

"Well, Sir," ſaid he, the inſtant I had paid my compliments to him, "I have peruſed your novel;-- "for you muſt know *that* is a taſk I always take upon myſelf— I am therefore ſorry to be under the "neceſſity of informing you that it is by no means "fit for publication. The language is puerile; the "ſentiments trite; the plot confuſed; and the cataſtrophe horrid:— in ſhort, Sir, you are not in "poſſeſſion of the grand ſecret ſo requiſite to inſure "the ſale of theſe things;— you ſhould ſtudy Pamela and Roderick Random, *Mr. What d'ye call it.*"

'I was

'I was proceeding to explain to him the difference between mere imitation and originality of compoſition; when he inſtantly cut me ſhort by obſerving, that I had omitted both Dedication and Preface, without which, the brighteſt production of human wit was not worth a ſingle farthing.

'Without giving me time to reply, he left me; but returned ſoon after with a large bundle, which upon inſpection I found contained a number of ready written prefaces and blank dedications, which he aſſured me had purchaſed of *Will Luteſtring* a journeyman draper in *Cheapſide*, at the rate of five and three-pence a dozen; and having read to me ſeveral extracts from them, concluded with deſiring me to ſelect any one I thought would ſuit my novel.

'I had ever conſidered prefaces to books to be what bawds are to proſtitutes; deſigned to daub and gloſs over the imperfections which it is impoſſible tohide from the judicious; formed to miſrepreſent and deceive, and calculated to blind the eyes and miſlead the judgement; monſters begot by artifice on abſurdity; the father of lies and advocates for Dulneſs.

'Such being my ſentiments, it is no great wonder that we could not agree. So taking my manuſcript I wiſhed him a good day, and left him to his meditations, determining in future to avoid every mortification ariſing from a miſapplication of my talents.

'The only probability that now appeared of placing my literary abilities in an advantageous and conſpicuous point of view, centered in the Stage. Here indeed was a field ſtill left open for me, where the judgment of an individual ſo far from operating to the prejudice of Genius, would be loſt in the acclamations of an applauding town, as the

'tear

'tear diſtilled from an April Cloud lies buried in the 'vaſt bead of the ocean.

'Induced by this hope I ſpeedily produced a tra-'gedy of five acts, the ſucceſs of which I the more 'depended upon as the ſtory was domeſtic. The 'name that I beſtowed upon it was that of "*The* "*Smithfield Tragedy or the life and death of Wat Tyler.*"

'A difficulty of procuring it a repreſentation ne-'ver once ſtruck me, as I concluded that the mana-'ger of any Theatre would be proud of an acquiſiti-'on which promiſed to confer honour on every one 'concerned in getting it up, and the more ſo as his 'own Intereſt was connected with that of men of 'Genius, who, if not ſufficiently encouraged, would, 'it was to be feared, withdraw their aſſiſtance en-'tirely from the ſtage, and leave the world in bar-'bariſm and the groſſeſt ignorance.

'You may eaſily conjecture therefore what muſt 'have been my aſtoniſhment on being aſked with a 'ſupercilious tone of authority, by the manager (to 'whom with great difficultly I got admittance) who 'it was that recommended me? at the ſame time 'giving me to underſtand, that it would be needleſs 'to apply to him without ſome ſuch aſſiſtance.

'I bowed to this image of majeſty and unable to 'anſwer him ſilently taking up my play, withdrew 'from his preſence.

'With ſome difficulty I obtained the patroniza-'tion of a young nobleman, under favour of whoſe 'epiſtle recommendatory I once more demanded an 'audience of the manager, and to whom I delivered 'my credentials. He received me this time much 'more to my ſatisfaction than the former; peruſed 'great part of my manuſcript in my preſence; did 'me the favour to alter ſeveral paſſages, which, 'though not much to their advantage, was never-'theleſs a proof of his *good nature*, nor did he per-

'mit

'mit me to depart, without a previous aſſurance of 'putting it immediately in rehearſal.

'I now concluded my fortune made for ever. My 'imagination preſented me with nothing but "*cry-*"*ſtal ſtreams and golden mountains*," and I rumin-'ated on my former miſcarriages and diſappoint-'ments with the utmoſt indifference, as too incon-'ſiderable to diſturb the happineſs of which I was 'then about to partake.

'I ſhall avoid prolixity as much as poſſible. Suffice 'it to ſay, that my piece, after undergoing a variety 'of alterations, was at length put into rehearſal, and 'the day fixed for its firſt appearance before the 'public.

'With the utmoſt impatience I counted the 'hours and the minutes, till the arrival of the mo-'ment, in which my genius, like the ſun from a 'cloud, was to burſt forth; and, unimpaired by 'the tranſitory eclipſe it had ſuſtained, was to 'illuminate the hemiſphere of literature and lift me 'to an eminence, undiſturbed by rancour and ſecure 'from the peſtilence of invidious malice.

'The clock ſtruck ſix. Secure behind the ſcenes, 'I beheld preparation making for the repreſentation 'which was to determine my future fortune. The 'actors were all diſpoſed ready for their cue, the 'bell rang, the curtain roſe, and the play began.

'The firſt act was very favourably received: in 'the ſecond, I thought I perceived ſome faint hiſſing, 'every idea of which penetrated into my very ſoul: 'the third act confirmed me in my belief: during the 'fourth, the marks of diſapprobation grew ſtill loud-'er, and before the concluſion of the fifth, my un-'fortunate tragedy made its literary exit, amidſt 'the united groans of the critics and the curſes of 'the actors.

'Mortified beyond expreſſion, this circumſtance determined

'determined me in my reſolution, of bidding adieu
'to every expectation of riſing as an author in the
'dramatic line. However, as I fancied I poſſeſſed
'abilities as an actor, I embraced an offer made me
'by one with whom I had contracted an acquain-
'tance behind the ſcenes, of making an excurſion
'into the country, and trying my talents *that* way.

'This new plan of itinerancy I ſhould have put
'in execution ſome months ago, had I not unluckily
'been arreſted, at the ſuit of a perſon who keeps a
'chandler's ſhop, and whom I had prevailed upon
'to give me credit, entirely on the ſtrength of the
'expectations my unfortunate play had given birth
'to. The inſtant the fate of my piece was anno-
'unced, that ſame inſtant was my own deſtiny caſt,
'and by a *Marſhalſea Court Writ* was I, to the ſhame
'of humanity and the diſgrace of a free country,
'dragged from my home and my connections, and
'barbarouſly thruſt into priſon for the ſum, the in-
'conſiderable ſum of forty ſhillings!'

CHAP. XVI.

Thoughts on Impriſonement for Debt. A lucky Diſcovery. A Releaſement from the Horrors of a Gaol. A Journey into Warwickſhire. *An Eſſay in the Theatric Walk, and the ill Effects of Vociferation.*

"HAVING compleated this narrative, I thanked him for the trouble he had been at in the relation, and we mutually aſſiſted each other in lamenting our common misfortune. The various ſcenes his life had been witneſs of, taught him the inſecurity of earthly happineſs, and the vanity of truſting to appearances. We had therefore only to expect a continuance of wretchedneſs, and,

in

in conſequence of ſuch an expectation, to make ourſelves as contented as we poſſibly could.

"We often deſcanted on the abſurdity and the barbarity of impriſonment for debt, which contains ſomewhat equally inexplicable to a common underſtanding, as ſhocking to humanity at finding a mixture of debtors little or great, ſuppoſed or real, unfortunate or criminal, ſubject to the caprice of reſentful creditors, and paſſing their years in an inactivity, unprofitable to their families and burdenſome to the ſtate: circumſtances which convey the moſt ſtriking proofs of the inexpediency, the inefficacy, and inutility of ſo impolitic a practice, replete with cruelty and diſgraceful to civil liberty.

"It may perhaps be thought, that we the more particularly dwelt upon this topic from motives of perſonal reſentment; and that galled by a ſenſe of our own ſufferings, we ſaw errors in ſuch a practice, which in any other ſituation in life would never have attracted our notice. This ſurmiſe, how probable ſoever it might be in fact, contains nevertheleſs no juſtification of ſo inhuman a proceeding.—Whilſt our priſons are thus loaded with human victims, intended as a ſacrifice to cruelty, ſubſiſting on the contribution of their friends, or ſtarving on the charity of ſtrangers, is it to be wondered at that our arts periſh and our manufactories decay?—that this is the caſe, reaſon aſſerts it, and every day's experience confirms it.

"I beg pardon, Sir, continued Mrs. Gilbert, for this digreſſion. It is the language of truth; it is the language of the heart! —

"Five weeks was I confined to this miſerable place, ſubject to every inconveniency and mortification which the human mind could ſuffer. I had by degrees parted with every thing I could poſſibly ſpare to procure the means of ſubſiſtence, and I began to

deſpair of poſſeſſing even this reſource much longer, ſo greatly were my means reduced.

" Whilſt I was thus afflicting myſelf with theſe melancholy ideas; penſive and ſolitary, one evening endeavouring to amuſe my thoughts with looking over ſome looſe papers, which lay confuſed in a ſmall band-box in a corner of the room, much neglected, to my agreeable aſtoniſhment, I found a *lottery ticket*, which had been given me by Mrs. Hilton, and which in my agitation of mind I had long concluded to have been left behind.

" Anxious to know its fate, I immediately ſent to enquire the value of what chance had thus unexpectedly thrown in my way, and was informed, that it had, ſometime ſince, been drawn a prize of a hundred pounds.

" Equally pleaſed and ſurprized at this intelligence, I imparted the welcome tidings to the unfortunate gentleman whoſe hiſtory I juſt now related, who congratulated me on my good fortune, and adviſed me to quit the horrid place of my confinement as expeditiouſly as poſſible.

" I perceived however, that whilſt he was ſo liberal in congratulating me on the proſpect of my regaining my liberty, he deeply ſighed at the reflection of the little probability there was of effecting *his own*.

" Unwilling therefore to increaſe his troubles by a compariſon which could not fail of proving diſagreeable, I gave him to underſtand, that it was not my inattention to let him continue any longer in his preſent ſituation; that he had already ſufficiently taſted of ſorrow, which (however volatile his actions might formerly have been, and to whatever latitude his principles might have been indulged) was ample correction for any faults ariſing from the levity of youth, or the failings and miſtakes of human nature, in

in whatever ſtation; and further, I aſſured him, that if I could in any other reſpect promote his welfare, I would not be backwards in attempting it.

"He thanked me for my friendſhip, and the ſincerity of my regard; and reſuming his gaiety, declared, that if he regained his liberty, it was yet his intention to try his talents upon the ſtage, with a view of aſcertaining, whether or not fate was inclined to indulge his exertions as an actor, which had doomed him to experience ſuch mortifications as a writer.

"I did not attempt to diſſuade him from his reſolution, as well knowing, that when a perſon is once determined to think himſelf in the right, it muſt be more than human evidence to convince him he is wrong. Parting however from him for the preſent, I retired to my cabbin, where, unable to ſleep, I lay ruminating in mind in what manner it would be moſt prudent to proceed.

"My experience of the inſtability of human affairs, and the tranſitory ſtate of mortal happineſs, gave me every reaſon to be doubtful, that Fortune would crown my future efforts with a greater ſhare of indulgence than formerly, or that I might now expect a receſs to my miſeries, already ſufficiently agravated, without the danger of a relapſe or the fear of a miſcarriage.

"The next morning I diſpoſed of my ticket, and having ſatisfied every demand of a pecuniary kind, as well thoſe of my fellow ſufferer Mr. Sefton, as myſelf, I joyfully bade adieu to an habitation where wretchedneſs and cruelty triumph over Chriſtianity, and the laws of humanity are trampled upon by the profane tread of unprincipled avarice.

"Mr. Sefton, who gladly attended me appeared very urgent to perſuade me into the notion of accompanying him into *Warwickſhire*, where the com-

pany which he was going to join had their rendezvous, and to which place he intended to depart as ſoon as he conveniently could.

" I before obſerved, that from my childhood I had been immoderately fond of theatrical exhibitions. This *penchant* indeed I had indulged to a fault, and was therefore very eaſily prevailed upon to agree to a propoſal in which my inclination had been ſo immediately conſulted, and which promiſed to be equally productive of pleaſure and entertainment.

" In a few days (having firſt provided ourſelves with neceſſaries) we ſet out for the ſcene of action, and without meeting any thing very remarkable on the road, arrived late in the day at the town where Mr. Sefton had flattered himſelf with meeting with his friend, under whoſe patronage he was to make his firſt appearance in the theatric line, and on whom depended his every expectation of a future engagement and ſupport.

" Should it be objected to me, that I had been too raſh and inconſiderate, in thus imprudently venturing myſelf (under the manifeſt diſadvantages of meeting with uncertainty and diſappointment) with a man of whom I had, from his own account, no great reaſon to expect the moſt grateful return, and whoſe morals were ſuch, as promiſed but little ſecurity from the violence of libidinous paſſions ;—it ought to be remembered, that moſt of my ſufferings hitherto had been cauſed by a too great faith in appearances, which had proved themſelves in the end to be founded on hypocriſy, and which had ſubjected me to misfortunes, impoſſible for the moſt penetrating eye of approved circumſpection to foreſee, and which thereby juſtified me in putting a more general confidence in him who had openly declared his errors, than in the oily tongue of diſſimulation and artifice, tho' diſguiſed under the ſpecious veil of pretended ſanctity.

" Having

" Having diſpatched a meſſage to Mr. Sock, the perſon of whom Mr. Sefton came in ſearch, we preſently afterwards were favoured with his company, and he appeared exceedingly rejoiced at finding his old friend in good health. The ſtate of the company's affairs he informed us, was by no means enviable, that they ſeldom ſhared more than half a crown on the nights of performance, and oftentimes not even ſo much. He however concluded with aſſuring Mr. Sefton, that if he ſtill found himſelf diſpoſed to embrace a theatric life, he would recommend him to the manager, with whom he had the *honour*, as he expreſſed it, of being in a ſtate of the moſt friendly intimacy; and who, he doubted not, would gladly take the opportunity of obliging him, in an acquieſcence with ſo reaſonable a requeſt.

" As my unfortunate fellow traveller, ſhould he reject this propoſal, perceived no alternative, beſides ſtarving, he very readily accepted the offer, and having recovered ourſelves from the fatigues of our journey, by the aſſiſtance of a plentiful ſupper, Mr. Sock took his leave, after wiſhing us a good repoſe, and promiſing to introduce Mr. Sefton the ſucceeding morning to the manager.

" The moment his friend was gone, my companion aſked me, with a mixture of fear and hope in his countenance, what I thought of the intelligence which had juſt been imparted to us? I candidly informed him of my ſentiments, and lamented with him the little probability there appeared of placing his talents in a light which might contribute either to his fortune or to his fame. The dearth of theatric merit indeed one day or other promiſed to reward his endeavours, by tranſplanting him to a ſuperior ſoil: but whilſt his abilities lay ruſticated in the region of oblivion, little could be expected from the moſt vigorous exertions of genius, but contempt, reproach, and poverty.

"We now departed, each to the reſpective bed aſſigned us, and in the morning, having breakfaſted, Mr. Sefton, agreeable to the former night's appointment, attended his friend to the manager, who received him very cordially; and having ſatisfied himſelf of the new candidate's abilities, immediately engaged him, upon the ſame terms as the reſt of the company, and affixed a day for his appearance in public.

"It was in the character of *King Richard the Third* that Mr. Sefton choſe to make the firſt trial of his ſkill; a character which, drawn by the maſterly pen of the immortal Shakeſpeare, demands a greater variety of powers than perhaps any other hero of that poet's creation. The rage of the tyrant, the ardour of the lover, the cunning of the hypocrite, and the jealouſy of unſatisfied ambition, all unite in the formation of a character, wonderful in the contemplation, and highly difficult in the repreſentation.

"Yet, ſuch was the taſk which Mr. Sefton undertook the execution of, and deaf to every expoſtulation which I made uſe of to diſſuade him from the attempt, he continued inflexible to all I could ſay, and prepared himſelf for the evening of trial with an undaunted reſolution, and the moſt ſanguine forebodings of infallible ſucceſs.

"The day at length arrived which was to determine the ſtrength of his expectations, and he went through his rehearſals with a preciſion that promiſed to gratify his hopes by a fortunate concluſion. Impatient for the conteſt, his panting ſoul manifeſted an ardent enthuſiaſm, which might have been miſtaken by a raw ſpectator for ſomething prophetic, but which ultimately terminated in a ſhameful miſcarriage and everlaſting downfall of all his flattering expectations from the tragic muſe.

"Before the concluſion of the very firſt ſoliloquy, owing

owing to his ignorance in the art of modulation, he unfortunately carried his voice to ſuch an amazing pitch, that, unable to confine it, he thereby created a diſſonance at once painful to himſelf and diſagreeable to his audience.

"Nor was this the only inconvenience that aroſe from the violence of his exertions. The manager, who had undertaken to repreſent the part of Buckingham, and who had drank ſomewhat more than ſobriety could well juſtify, hearing an uncommon noiſe upon the ſtage, and ſuch as his ears had for a long time been unaccuſtomed to, concluded that the houſe was on fire, and under this perſuaſion inſtantly gave the alarm.

"The audience, many of whoſe imaginations were fertile at multiplying danger, were preſently thrown into the moſt violent commotion. Unmindful of the fate of the unfortunate Richard, every one was ſolely intent on the preſervation of himſelf. The cry of *fire* prevailed, and as it was impoſſible to undeceive them, poor Sefton, to his unſpeakable mortification, and to the everlaſting diſgrace of his hopes found himſelf forſaken by his auditory, and the inſtrument of mirth to the unfeeling minds of his brother actors.

CHAP. XVII,

Contains ſome Reflections upon the moral Tendency of Dramatic Exhibitions. The Deſcription of a Country Theatre. A ridiculous Termination to a tragical Attempt. And a new Engagement.

"THE ill-ſucceſs which this unfortunate candidate for the buſkin experienced on his firſt eſſay, thoroughly intimidated him from a farther attempt as a tragedian. He began now to be

ſenſible of the neceſſity and wholeſomeneſs of my advice, and the danger mankind in general ran of miſtaking their talents: he determined therefore to relinquiſh all endeavours of a ſimilar kind with the laſt, and humbly content himſelf with the laurels he might more eaſily gather in the fields of comedy.

"I commended his reſolution, and by cloſe application he was ſoon enabled to retrive the honours he had loſt, and once more to face an audience, tho' in ſomewhat a more humble caſt of character than that he had lately attempted to fill; but which, however inferior, was nevertheleſs more likely to give ſatisfaction, and ſuch as expoſed him leſs to danger.

"His abilities, as I expected, were here ſucceſsfully exerted; nor did he, as before, lead the manager into an error by an unatural vociferation, which had operated ſo much to his diſgrace; but coolly, decently, and juſtly he delivered the ſterling ſenſe of the author, untainted by abſurdity and untinctured by buffoonery.

"I was not backwards in congratulating him upon the ſucceſs which at laſt attended his labours, and pleaſed myſelf with thinking that Fortune might yet, in the end, recompence him for all the troubles and diſappointments he had experienced; and by a ſudden reverſe of diſpoſition, might place his talents in a light, which promiſed to contribute equally to the eſtabliſhment of his fame and the advancement of his intereſt.

"As to myſelf, I as yet cheriſhed no intention of embracing a life which, it was but too evident, ſubjected its profeſſors to ſuch extenſive and frequent inconveniencies: beſides, a recollection of former ſcenes and occurrences (in ſpite of the length of time elapſed) would often give me the moſt poignant uneaſineſs, and fill me with the moſt melancholy reflections.

flections. The days of my infancy, which I innocently paſt under the care and indulgence of Miſs Wilmot; the many happy hours I ſo agreeably enjoyed with the Hilton family, and the divers pleaſing converſations thoſe ſcenes gave birth to, would frequently intrude upon my thoughts, and furniſh me with compariſons that would nearly hurry me to the gate of diſtraction, and be the means of eradicating every dawn of ſenſe, reaſon, and moral rectitude.

"The manager of this little community would often favour us with his company, and by his perſuaſion, I was at length prevailed upon regularly to ſtudy a dramatic character; which taſk I undertook, more with a view of putting an end to his perpetual ſolicitations, which began to grow troubleſome, than with the intention of profiting by a future repreſentation of it.

"However, as I had from my childhood imbibed a partiality for theſe kind of writings, I could not conſider the taſk the manager had injoined me to the performance of as any ways burthenſome; on the contrary, the cloſer I applied myſelf to it, the ſtronger did my inclination prompt me to ſuch ſtudies, and by them I found my knowledge increaſed, my mind enlightened, and my ideas enlarged.

"Powerful as prejudice undoubtedly is and numerous as thoſe are who ſo bitterly inveigh againſt the ſtage as the nurſery of profaneneſs and debauchery; let them but once diveſt themſelves of their obſtinacy, and condeſcend to follow the guidance of truth through the plain frequented road of inſtructive reaſon, and there is not an individual amongſt them but muſt confeſs, that the Stage, ſo far from being the ſeminary of vice, is a moral mirror; where, by a faithful repreſentation of undiſguiſed nature, virtue is invited and encouraged to perſe-

vere, and wickedneſs and folly meet the puniſhment they ſo juſtly merit, by a timely application of the ſword of reproof, ſeverly ſharpened by the powers of wit and ridicule.

" Fraud and avarice, envy and uncharitableneſs, hate and hypocriſy, all there ſee the deformity of their characters, and if not reſolved on reformation through principle, they are nevertheleſs deterred from their vices by motives of intereſt, and a fear of meeting the puniſhment due to their crimes and the baſeneſs of their actions.

" Such being the manifeſt purport and intention of the drama, who but an enthuſiaſt, the blindeſt of the blind, would unjuſtly condemn ſo uſeful an inſtitution, productive of inſtruction and replete with the chaſteſt morality, merely through principles of ignorance and prejudice, and an obſtinate adherence to the bigotry of education and the errors of a vitiated judgment.

" But to return. Being now completely miſtreſs of the part recommended me by the manager, by his further perſuaſion I was induced to agree to a public repreſentation thereof. The encomiums, which not only himſelf and his friend Mr. Sock, but likewiſe my old fellow ſufferer Mr. Sefton, paſſed upon my judgment and execution, gave me every reaſon to flatter myſelf with a ſucceſsful termination to my firſt Theſpian attempt, howſoever inexperienced I was in the *arcana* of theatrical policy, and thoſe arts to which ſo many of our firſt rate performers are indebted for their conſequence with the public.

" The character, the ſtudy of which I had principally devoted my attention to, was that of *Rowe*'s *Jane Shore*, and in which I was particularly deſirous of making my firſt appearance. In conſequence of my expreſſing my deſire, the company, by order

of

of the manager, made the neceſſary diſpoſitions for its repreſentation; ſhortly after which a day was fixed upon for that purpoſe, and I attended the event of the evening, with a diffidence which is inſeparable to a mind ſenſible of its own propenſity to err, and the fallibility of human penetration.

"Notwithſtanding I had little to fear from the critical diſcernment of a country audience, I was nevertheleſs under the moſt terrible apprehenſions of meeting with ſome accident, ſimilar to that which befell poor Sefton, and which might at once retard the progreſſive ardour of my hopes, and be the means of damping my future exertions.

"Our theatre was converted into its preſent appearance out of the ruins of an old barn. The ſcenes, tho' no ways gaudy in exterior ornament, were however ſuch as ſerved to decorate the natural rudeneſs of the walls, and to impede the paſſage of the wind, which otherwiſe had free egreſs from numberleſs chaſms and apertures, which diſgraced the edifice and were productive of inconvenience to the ſpectators.

"The ſeats were ſuch as well correſponded with he other parts of the building: a few rough deal boards, ornamented upon top with coarſe red baize properly ſet off with the addition of a number of braſs nails, preſented to the ruſtic ſpectators no incompetent notion of genuine finery, and preſerved an idea of uniformity, which tended to the ſatisfaction of the audience and the credit of the manager. Our chandeliers were compoſed of two ſmall hoops ſuſpended over the ſtage by means of a ſtring, and round which were diſpoſed at equal diſtances ſeveral ſmall candles ſupported in clay ſockets, no leſs remarkable for their ſimplicity than for the utility they manifeſted.

"Such was the building, and ſuch were the decorations thereunto belonging, where I was doomed to

make

make my firſt experiment in a theatrical capacity, which fatally led me on to partake of the ſorrows and inconveniencies ſo inſeparably connected with a life of itinerancy, and which has been the cauſe of all the ſubſequent misfortunes I have ſo ſharply experienced, and this very moment am the melancholy evidence of.

" The long expected night at length made its appearance, and I acquitted myſelf through four long acts much to the ſatisfaction of the audience and the expectation of my friends. The diffidence indeed I laboured under operated much to the prejudice of my abilities, as it was the unavoidable means of hurting my feeling by preſſing the powers of declamation, and by deſtroying the fineſt faculties of deſcriptive paſſion.

" I had now commenced the laſt act of the piece, and ſo amazingly were my feelings excited by the ſpirit of the character, that whilſt I lay extended on the ſtage waiting the moment which was to ſummon me to a poetical diſſolution, I almoſt realized the imagination of the author by nearly ſinking into a ſtate of non exiſtence, by undergoing a temporary ſuſpenſion of the powers of Memory, Senſe, and Reflection.

" Whilſt I lay in this ſtate of inanimation, pregnant with the moſt dangerous conſequences, I was ſuddenly rouſed to a ſenſe of feeling by an opperation no leſs violent than extraordinary.

" One of the ſpectators more *wiſe* than the reſt, who perceived the condition to which I was reduced and the inſenſibility of thoſe around me, privately cut the packthread by which the chandeliers were ſuſpended, and under one of which I lay lifeleſs, and to all appearance eternally ſo.

" My head-dreſs, which was fancifully imagined, was in a moment in a blaze, and the fire communicating

cating itſelf to my face recalled my ſcattered ſenſes, and, unmindful of dramatic propriety, brought me inſtantly upon my feet, an object of the utmoſt pity, danger, and diſtreſs.

" Sefton, who beheld my ſituation with an eye of commiſeration, haſtily caught up a bowl in which was contained a ſolution of lamb-black, and by a ſudden application thereof extinguiſhed the blaze, and reſtored peace once more to the elemental commotion.

" It would be a difficult taſk to deſcribe the figure I made in conſequence of this adventure. The ornaments of my head-dreſs half deſtroyed; my hair diſhevelled, and the black compoſition running in ſtreams from the crown of head to the oppoſite extremity, all together formed a ſpectacle that it was impoſſible to behold without the moſt riſible emotions.

" This accident unavoidably terminated the evening's performance.—

" By the aſſiſtance of Mrs. Rant, the manager's wife, I was ſoon enabled to make a more decent appearance and to receive the condolence of the company upon my misfortune, who however were unanimous in beſtowing their approbation upon my taſte and the judgment with which I executed the part aſſigned me.

" As the money which I had received in exchange for my lottery ticket was not yet nearly expended, I made ſhift to live in a manner much more comfortble than moſt of my companions: I however confined myſelf as much as poſſible from a too great intimacy with them, which, I had caution ſufficient to foreſee, would only tend to my own diſadvantage.

" Being now fully admitted a member of this ſelect ſociety, I undertook a variety of characters, in moſt of which I met with applauſe. The other female

male performers, unlike thoſe in higher life, were happy in a contemplation of my ſucceſs, and unknown to envy, congratulated me on attaining a ſucceſsful pre-eminence in my profeſſion, which indulged them in a relaxation to their labours and a continuance of the repoſe they ſo much coveted.

" The ſeaſon being now almoſt at an end, and Mr. Rant's attendance being required at London, where he occaſionally had the honour of filling an inferior character, the company began to think of diſperſing.

" For my own part, I had by this time inſenſibly contracted ſo violent an inclination for a theatrical life, that I was determined to puſh my fortune in that ſphere, as much deaf to every conſideration of what my indiſcretion might entail upon me, by ſo public an expoſure of myſelf upon an open ſtage, as to the hurt my reputation might ſuſtain by an aſſociation with people whoſe notions of moral obligations are in general but indifferently regulated.

" As there were many winter companies to whom there was no doubt of my proving an acquiſition in the tragic walk, I waited patiently for an opportunity of joining them, and imparting my intention to Mr. Sefton, he not only greatly commended my reſolution, but offered at the ſame time, with a ſeeming ſincerity, to attend me; an offer which I very readily accepted.

" It was not long before I made an engagement with the manager of a company in Worceſterſhire. The time being near for my joining them, after having made every neceſſary preparation and intimating my intention to Sefton, the next day was fixed upon by us to take leave of our old friends, and to proceed onwards to the ſpot of our deſtination.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

A Cure for Credulity. An Excurſion further into the Country. The Hardſhips of a wandering Life deſcribed. An Interview with a Magiſtrate. And an Adventure in the matrimonial Way.

"EARLY the next morning I repaired to the theatre, which I found in the greateſt commotion imaginable, occaſioned by the elopement of Mrs. Rant with my quandam acquaintance and intended brother adventurer Mr. Sefton.

"It ſeems that they had contrived to effect this, apparently, long premeditated ſtep, on the preceding evening, and that Mrs. Rant had taken care previouſly to ſecure all the treaſure which her prudent huſband had extracted from the labours of the company during the whole ſeaſon.

"The affliction of the manager, it was pretty evident, did not proceed ſo much on account of the loſs of his wife, as that of his money. Diſtracted beyond meaſure he committed a thouſand extravagancies: he curſed, he ſwore, he devoted her to all the furies, and winding himſelf up to an aſtoniſhing pitch of phrenzy, he execrated himſelf and all mankind.

"Notwithſtanding I was a ſharer in his misfortune, as being thereby deprived of my intended companion, yet I bore the event with the utmoſt indifference: I muſt confeſs, that I was far from being ſatisfied with the conduct of Mr. Sefton, who, I hoped, had profited by his former indiſcretions ſufficiently to have ſeen the neceſſity of keeping up the appearances, and affecting a virtue, though he had it not. But this adventure more than ever convinced me, that when Vice once takes root in the human heart,

heart, it is impoſſible for the moſt vigorous exertions to eradicate or ſtay the progreſs of its baneful influence.

"As the manager had contracted ſeveral ſmall debts in the town, which by this unlucky accident he declared himſelf unable to diſcharge, and as there was a neceſſity for his reaching the metropolis the following day, my compaſſion was truly excited dy a ſenſe of his ſufferings, and I was determined to aſſiſt him even to the laſt ſhilling I was poſſeſſed of.

"This inſtance of my regard for him he appeared to receive with the pureſt notions of gratitude, and having fulfilled my intentions with reſpect to his pecuniary engagements, I ſaw him with pleaſure take poſt-chaiſe, whilſt his tears ſeemed to expreſs his thanks for the obligation I had laid him under and ſcarcely permitted him the powers of ſpeech.

"The inſtant he was gone, Mr. Sock, who was a witneſs of the whole tranſaction, turning quick upon me, with a ſarcaſtic kind of look, pronounced in an emphatic tone the word "*bite*."

"I enquired of him what he meant, and burſting into an immoderate fit of laughter, he aſked me, how I could poſibly be the dupe of ſo improbable a ſtory? That ſo far from Mrs. Rant's having any intention of quitting her huſband, both herſelf and Sefton were to meet him agreeable to his own appointment, at *Daventry*; and the manager having received intimation from the latter, of my being in poſſeſſion of a ſum of money, artfully contrived this device to deprive me of it, and that he had effected his purpoſe by the advice, and with the aſſiſtance of both the parties whom he had repreſented as criminal only to himſelf.

"The villainy of the manager did not make near ſo much impreſſion upon me as that of reflecting on the

the ingratitude of Sefton. The return I received for the obligations I had conferred upon him, was however productive of one eſſential piece of knowledge to me,—it taught me, that confeſſion is not always the forerunner of repentance, and that where ingratitude once takes up a reſidence in the heart, it is the deſtruction of all confidence and the bane of every moral virtue

" As this impoſition upon my credulity had been the means of greatly exhauſting my finances, I made all the expedition I poſſibly could to fulfill my engagement by joining the company in Worceſterſhire. The next day I arrived ſafe, and having paid my compliments to the new manager and the reſt of the performers, I prepared myſelf for the fatigues of the enſuing campaign, with an ardour that foreboded a ſucceſsful concluſion.

" To thoſe who never experienced the mutable events of a wandering life, it would be no eaſy taſk to convey a proper idea of the hardſhips inſeparably connected with a theatrical Quixotiſm. Friendleſs, hopeleſs, and often pennyleſs, we have to combat with the wantonneſs of the world and the inſults of ignorance and prejudice, procuring to ourſelves a miſerable exiſtence by means which prudence would turn from and delicacy bluſh to own.

" Such, however, were the ſtraits to which I was reduced by the ſeverity of my deſtiny, and ſuch the inſults and inconveniencies I had to encounter by an adherence to a profeſſion which ſubjected me to the caprice of the multitude and the pity of the compaſſionate.

" The new manager was one who was well acquainted with the method of regulating a theatre. By the prudent ſteps he had recourſe to, he greatly augmented the revenues of the company, who, in general, fared much better than their rambling competitors

petitors, and placed them, in point of dramatic eminence, on a level with the beſt.

" In the ſmall ſhare that I bore of their various ſcenes, I acquitted myſelf much to the ſatisfaction of the ſpectators, nor had I the leaſt inclination to exchange my manner of life, (however diſhonourable the ſituation of a ſtage-player is conſidered) I pleaſed myſelf in reflecting that I enjoyed more real repoſe from my misfortunes, under the ſhelter of that ſituation, than I had at any time experienced ſince my elopement from the Hilton family, and that I was thereby enabled to procure to myſelf the neceſſaries of life without any other dependance than upon my own application and unwearied induſtry.

" I continued in this ſociety the greateſt part of the winter, when an accident happened that had like to have entirely diſconcerted all my meaſures and to have reduced me to the neceſſity of ſeeking ſome other employment.

" As I was one evening behind the ſcenes ready to begin the part allotted me, I was ſurprized with an order requiring my immediate attendance on a neighbouring juſtice. Unable to account for the motives of this command, I inſtantly prepared me to pay an implicit obedience to the magiſterial mandate, and puting myſelf under the direction of the meſſenger, we preſently arrived at his worſhip's habitation.

" I was immediately ſhewn into the parlour, where I had not long been before the juſtice made his appearance. An air of auſterity, which he ſtrongly affected to put on, threw me into an inſtant fit of trembling, in ſo much that I was incapable of affording him the reſpect the ſuperiority of his ſtation demanded.

" Per-

" Perceiving me ſo much terrified, and deſirous of moderating my fears, he began to abate of his ſeverity, when, finding my apprehenſions ſomewhat compoſed, he addreſſed me in the following manner:

" Notwithſtanding, Madam, the motive which " occaſions my ſo ſuddenly ſending for you, is not " of the moſt agreeable kind, I would nevertheleſs " counſel you to lay aſide your fears and to believe " me ſo far your friend, as to ſoften the rigour of " the law, which *in thoſe caſes* would but ill agree " with the delicacy of your ſex or the nature of your " ſituation.

" Ignorant of what all this meant, I deſired, as a favour, that he would explain to me the drift of his diſcourſe, and what crime it was that I had been guilty of, deſerving the puniſhment he was ſo anxious to avert.

" He aſked me, whether or not I had ever formed any acquaintance or connection with a Mr. Moreton, a neighbouring gentleman of conſiderable property? I anſwered him, that I had once, and never but once ſeen him, having met him accidentally as I was indulging myſelf with a morning's walk, a kind of recreation I had long accuſtomed myſelf to, as innocent in itſelf and beneficial to the health.

" Having ſatisfied himſelf in this particular, politely addreſſing himſelf to me, he proceed thus:

" To a perſon poſſeſſed of but common penetra- " tion nothing is more eaſy than to unravel the ſeem- " ingly myſterious reaſons which compelled me to " ſo extraordinary a proof of my authority. Jealou- " ſy is of all other paſſions the moſt dangerous and " deteſtable, it leads the unfortunate being, who is " ſo unhappy as to be ſubject to its infatuations, " into the abſurdity of viewing every thing in a con- " trary light; it changes the good to bad, the bad

to

" to worſe, and looks for blemiſhes and imperfecti-
" ons where the eye of candour diſcovers only the
" genuine marks of beauty and regularity: hence it
" is, Madam, that I have been conſtrained to a pro-
" ceeding which of all others is the moſt diſagree-
" able to my nature, as it has, I fear, been the means
" of creating apprehenſions that ought never to diſ-
" turb the tranquillity of her who is miſtreſs of per-
" fections ſufficient to ſoften the ſeverity of the law,
" even where it is juſtly due, and whoſe merit can-
" not fail of drawing the bluſh from envy and forc-
" ing rancour to turn aſide, deſpairing of her pur-
" poſe."

" I thanked him for his very polite compliment, but confeſſed myſelf as much as ever at a loſs to account for the circumſtance which had procured me the honour of his worſhip's acquaintance, and once more begged of him that he would give me ſome inſight into a matter which very much exceeded my comprehenſion, and which it was impoſſibe for me to underſtand, unaſſiſted by his generoſity.

" In compliance with my deſire, he informed me that the gentleman (relative to whom he had interrogated me) was unfortunately married to a lady of a diſpoſition remarkably jealous: that ſome one had given her an intimation that her huſband was frequent in his viſits to me, and that I had thereby taken an opportunity of ſeducing his affections from her, who lawfully ought to be miſtreſs of them, and that triumphing in the ſucceſs of my endeavours, with a moſt abandoned effrontery, I had perſevered in my wickedneſs and was even the foremoſt in encouraging ſuch illicit interviews, which were calculated for no other purpoſe than that of increaſing his infidelity and diſturbing her domeſtic felicity.

" He likewiſe gave me to underſtand, that, fired with the ſpirit of reſentment, ſhe had applied to him for

for an interference of his authority to put a ſtop to ſo infamous a commerce by a vigorous enforcement of the ſtatute for the diſcouragement of vagrants and ſtage players, under which deſcription ſhe inſiſted I came, and for the purpoſe of which ſhe had, *herſelf*, that day exhibited an information againſt me.

"Shocked as I undoubtedly was at this cruel and unjuſt treatment, I had yet left preſence of mind ſufficient to gain over the magiſtrate to my intereſt, by complimenting him on the delicacy of his proceeding and the juſtice of his declarations.

"My flatteries, I ſoon perceived, were not entirely loſt in the application; he counſelled me, in order to avoid the effects of her information, to leave the town and ſacrifice my engagement with the manager, rather than by an obſtinate continuance in my preſent ſtation expoſe myſelf to her further indignation, which, in ſuch a caſe, it would be impoſſible for him to protect me againſt.

"I thanked him for his friendſhip and advice, and promiſing to regulate my conduct in conformity thereunto, I took my leave of him almoſt diſtracted with reflecting on the the extreme hardſhips to which my fate ſubjected me, and how little I merited the misfortunes to which I was continually expoſed.

"As it was now too late in the evening to think of reſuming my theatrical duty, which the meſſage from the magiſtrate had ſo ſuddenly interrupted, I returned to my own apartment, when, to my infinite ſurprize, I was accoſted by Mr. Moreton, the identical perſon who was the original cauſe of my preſent uneaſineſs, and who, I was informed, had been waiting a conſiderable time in expectation of my return.

"He informed me that he had learnt, to his aſtoniſhment, the particulars of his wife's conduct, and that he was come in conſequence thereof to aſſure me, that he was ſo much afflicted with the fears of what

what I might ſuffer by the violence of her ill founded paſſions, that he thought it his duty to contribute every thing in his power to convince me of the ſincerity of his regard and the idea he entertained of my merits.

" In reply to this addreſs, I made him acquainted with the converſation which I had juſt been honoured with by the juſtice, and the advice he had ſubmitted to my conſideration.

" This proof of his worſhip's humane diſpoſition was received by Mr. Moreton with the approbation it ſo eminently deſerved, and he recommended it to me to fulfill the friendly injunction the magiſtrate had laid on me without delay, and to the intent that nothing might create an impediment to the execution of ſuch a ſcheme, he forced me to accept a bank note, which he deſired my acceptance of as a token of his friendſhip and his willingneſs to make atonement for the paſſions and failings of his wife.

" Scarcely had he finiſhed the delivery of this addreſs, when, unceremoniouſly burſting into my preſence, I was alarmed by the appearance of a lady, the fiery glances of whoſe eyes informed me, in terms ſtronger than words, that ſhe could be no other than Mrs. Moreton.

" Eyeing me in a moſt contemptuous manner, and directing herſelf at the ſame time to her huſband, who appeared much alarmed at ſo extraordinary an adventure, ſhe expreſſed herſelf to him nearly as follows:

" Well, Sir, will you any longer deny your in-
" fidelities, and endeavour by the paltry aid of
" weak aſſertions, ſupported alone by falſhood and
" prevarication, to combat occular demonſtration?
" Will you perſiſt, as heretofore, in arraigning the
" evidences of my ſenſes, or ſeek to ſhelter your
" wickedneſs under the cloak of hypocriſy and af-

" fected

" fected paſſion? Be aſſured, Sir, ſuch behaviour " is as weak as it is contemptible, and that, howe- " ver you may triumph over the affections of a " weak woman; however you may laugh at religi- " ous ties and moral obligations; your perfidy ſhall " no longer paſs unpuniſhed, but that you ſhall, how " much ſoever againſt your inclination, experience " the conſequences reſulting from the criminality " of illicit connections and the reſentments of a " ſlighted, inſulted wife."

" The moment ſhe had finiſhed this ſhort harangue, without giving either of us time to reply, ſhe quitted us in a paroxyſm of paſſion, unable to account for the circumſtance of her ſo ſudden admiſſion, or in what manner ſhe intended to execute the threats ſhe had ſo bitterly meditated.

CHAP. XIX.

The Effects of Paſſion, or a School for Jealouſy. A Flight by Moon-light. A Stage-coach Acquaintance. Arrival at Shrewſbury. *Proceed to* Cheſter, *and depart from thence into* Lancaſhire.

" WE had not long permitted us to indulge our reflections, before I received a ſecond meſſage from the juſtice deſiring my immediate attendance, he having ſomething very particular to communicate.

" As I was already prepoſſeſſed with an opinion of his candour, I was not under the leaſt apprehenſions of meeting with any ill effects from the violent exertions of pre-judging malice, or from an enforcement of the authority with which he was ſo legally inveſted, flattering myſelf, that when he had heard both ſides of the ſtory, the circumſtances deliberately conſidered would ſo far operate in my favour

favour us to leave no room for the invidious inſinuations of jeſuitical cunning, or the unbounded rancour of exaſperated paſſion.

" Mr Moreton, ſeeing me about to depart, with a tenderneſs that did honour to his humanity, inſiſted upon accompanying me. I was neither able, nor indeed was I willing to refuſe him, ſo that, interpreting my ſilence into aprobation, we preſently arrived, very late in the evening, at the worſhipful manſion I had ſo lately quitted.

" The lady, whoſe preſence had a little before ſo much alarmed us, was there before us. At finding her huſband with me ſhe appeared if poſſible, a thouſand times more enraged than formerly: the violence of her reſentment abſolutely deprived her of Reaſon; her tongue faultered; her eyes appeared as ſtarting from their ſockets, and in an inſtant ſhe fell to the earth in ſtrong convulſions, a ſhocking ſpectacle of unregulated paſſion.

" The magiſtrate ordered a phyſician immediately to attend her, by whoſe advice ſhe was, when ſomewhat recovered, conveyed into a warm bed and the greateſt care imaginable taken of her to prevent a relapſe, which would, moſt probably, have been attended with fatal conſequences.

" I now began to perceive, that I had acted prudently in permitting Mr. Moreton to accompany me, without whoſe aſſiſtance I ſhould have found it a difficult taſk to have quieted the ſuſpicions of the juſtice relative to his being found in my apartment at ſo late an hour,—for it was now almoſt midnight.

" I gave him however all the particulars of our interview from the moment of my firſt ſeeing him that evening, to the inſtant of my receiving his worſhip's meſſage. Mr. Moreton confirmed the truth of my relation, and aſſured him how exceedingly grieved he was at his wife's conduct, a knowledge of which had

had been the ſole inducement of the viſit which he had made me, in order that he might thereby have an opportunity of convincing me of his readineſs to prevent the intended miſchief ſhe was ſo anxious to effect, and to enable me to avoid her indignation by a precipatate retreat to ſome other part of the country.

"Having by this means ſatisfied himſelf of the fallacy of the charge exhibited againſt me by Mrs. Moreton, and of my readineſs to conform myſelf in every point to his worſhip's directions, he adviſed me to prepare myſelf without delay for departure, as the only certain means of avoiding the malice of a woman, who, it was but too evident, blinded by her jealouſy, would not ſcruple to proceed to any extremity that flattered her with the hopes of gratifying her revengeful diſpoſition.

"Willing as I was to render the worthy magiſtrate all the ſatisfaction he deſired, I was nevertheleſs uneaſy at reflecting on the neceſſity I was under of ſo inſtantly departing, no one knew whither, and of thereby expoſing myſelf to a ſeries of new misfortunes, which I might probably find a more difficult taſk to encounter than I had experinced on the preſent occaſion.

"However, as there was no other alternative, I made all the haſte I poſſibly could to collect what cloaths and other neceſſaries the emergency of the caſe required, and about four of the clock in a fine moon-light morning, without having time to take leave of a ſingle acquaintance, I proceeded by the northward into Shropſhire.

"At Bridgenorth I diſcharged the poſt-chaiſe which brought me thither, and luckily meeting with the Shewſbury-ſtage, I ſecured myſelf a place therein, where the ſame evening I arrived ſafe from all accidents, though greatly affected with the fatigue of the journey and the badneſs of the road.

"It was during this laſt ſtage I firſt contracted an acquaintance with Mr. Rattle, who, like me, was going to Shrewſbury, and as people in general are never more communicative than when travelling in a ſtage-coach, we endeavoured to amuſe each other as well as we could, with that kind of *chit-chat*, which in the place of more ingenious topics ſerves as a very tolerable ſubſtitute whereby to ſhorten the length of the way, and furniſhes an agreeable amuſement to the thought, which without ſuch aids would not fail of proving burthenſome and uneaſy.

"As there was no other paſſenger, and as Mr. Rattle was a proficient in this kind of ſmall talk, the time paſſed away exceedingly quick, and more ſo, as I was greatly weaned from the dejection which once ſo overwhelmed me, and which ſo affected my ſpirits, that like a contagious diſtemper it was productive of the blackeſt melancholy to all around me.

"My fellow traveller informed me, that he had been in London with the intention of engaging ſome comedians for the purpoſe of ſupplying certain deficiencies in a company to which he belonged, then at Shrewſbury, and with the manager of whom he was upon a footing of the moſt friendly intimacy: that however he had not met with the ſucceſs he hoped from his journey, having been able to procure ſcarce half the number his commiſſion authorized him to engage, and that unleſs they could meet with ſome recruits, and *that* expeditiouſly, it would be impoſſible to conduct their campaign to the ſatisfaction of the town or the credit of themſelves.

"This information of Mr. Rattle's proved very acceptable to me, as there appeared a probability from the above account of my being ſoon enabled to ſupply the loſs of my former engagements, and, from the dearth of performers, to be permitted to diſplay my talents in a light which might tend to my advantage.

"Being

" Being now arrived at the end of our journey, I took my leave of my fellow traveller, and as I was much fatigued with having no ſleep the preceding night, notwithſtanding the infancy of the evening, I preſently retired to reſt.

" The next morning I roſe exceedingly refreſhed, and having breakfaſted I diſpatched a line to Mr. Rattle, deſiring the favour of his company at the inn, if convenient to him.

" It was not long before he made his appearance, when I informed him of my ſituation, the profeſſion in which I was embarked, and the motive which induced me to quit my Worceſterſhire connection; and finally, I concluded with expreſſing a deſire of being received, on my former footing, in the company to which he belonged; his acknowledged intimacy with the manager having flattered me with hopes of his being able to effect an engagement of that ſort, and the readier, as he had informed me of the great want they were then in of performers.

" He was no leſs pleaſed than ſurprized at the news I had imparted to him. I found he was no ſtranger to my name and reputation, and that ſeveral of my old acquaintance with whom I had played in Mr. Rant's company, were then at Shrewſbury, and would be glad to find me with them, particularly Mr. Sefton who was but lately arrived amongſt them, and who had frequently entertained them with a relation of our mutual adventures, and the reflections they had given birth to.

" I know not which was the greateſt, my reſentment, or my aſtoniſhment, at hearing the name of a man who by his ingratitude had given me ſo much reaſon to deſpiſe and deteſt him: I however experienced a ſatisfaction in the idea of having it in my power to expoſtulate with him on the barbarity of his conduct, and the manifeſt injuſtice he had

done me by ſo ſhameful an impoſition upon my good nature, and by having recourſe to artifices diſgraceful to manhood and repugnant to the principles of honeſty.

" With Mr. Rattle's approbation the afternoon was fixed upon for my firſt interview with the manager, whom he promiſed to prepare for ſeeing me and to incline him in favour of my propoſitions.

" Agreeable to the appointment, and at the hour fixed upon, Mr. Rattle, who officiated as maſter of the ceremonies, introduced the gentleman upon whom I depended for an engagement, which he gladly and willingly agreed to, and having recommended ſeveral characters for my particular ſtudy, politely left me, deſiring me to favour him with my attenddance the following day at the theatre.

" The ſucceeding morning I repaired to the place to which the manager had invited me, and preſently reconoitered ſeveral of my old fellow labourers, who congratulated me upon my arrival amongſt them, and were particularly officious in making me an offer of their ſervice. I looked for Sefton, but without effect; he had been miſſing all the morning, nor could any one conjecture what was become of him.

" It appeared afterwards, that Rattle, not doubting of affording him pleaſure, had made him acquainted with my arrival and ſubſequent engagement; which, ſo far from producing the effect Rattle had expected, on the contrary had occaſioned his abſence and final departure, having never afterwards been h ard of; a circumſtance which greatly aſtoniſhed thoſe, who, unacquainted with his guilt, could form but an inadequate notion of the powers of conſcience, or the ſecret puniſhment that attends ingratitude.

" The little fame which I had purchaſed in my former endeavours, experienced no diminution from my

my preſent purſuits; I more and more gave ſatiſfaction, and I ſo far conquered the melancholy which once rendered my exiſtence miſerable, that my ſpirits, naturally full and ſparkling, found room to operate and by ſuch means made me a new creature, the life of ſociety and the ſoul of ſocial harmony.

"I no longer grieved with reflecting on the interruption my domeſtic felicity had received; but, truly indifferent in regard to what was the preſent ſituation or purſuits of Mr. Gilbert, I determined neither to afflict myſelf with the memory of paſt events, nor yet to render myſelf unhappy by an anticipation of misfortune, which it is time enough to lament when impoſſible to avert.

"From Shrewſbury we proceeded to Cheſter, where we reviewed our forces, and from our united exertions reaped a tolerable harveſt.

"This method of life is however of all others the moſt uncertain: wandering about in continual ſearch of the means to exiſt, we were evermore ſubject to the mortification of meeting with a diſappointment, and that, frequently, where we had every reaſon to expect a contrary reception.

"It is true, I was leſs expoſed to thoſe mortifications than any other member of our little community, as I was yet in poſſeſſion of ſome trifle of my own; which indeed I found highly convenient, not only in reſpect to what regarded my own wants, but the more particularly ſo, as it enabled me to afford an occaſional aſſiſtance to my friends and acquaintance, to whom ſuch favours ſeldom proved unacceptable.

"As I was conſidered by them as a ſingle perſon, it was not to be wondered at that I had frequent offers made me of changing my ſuppoſed condition: amongſt the reſt of my ſuitors, Mr. Rattle was foremoſt in proffering his ſervices, which offer for

cogent reaſons I thought it beſt to decline. I deduced to myſelf however conſiderable amuſement by thoſe circumſtances; yet, although in fact I eſteemed myſelf as diſengaged from all matrimonial obligations, I nevertheleſs determined to form no new connection of that ſort, as remembering the ill ſucceſs which attended my firſt attempt, and the little probability I ran of inſuring to myſelf any felicity in taking for a partner one whoſe libertine principles rendered him very unfit to promote the happineſs of a woman of delicacy, ſenſibility, or domeſtic feeling.

" Theſe ſentiments, in general the reverſe of thoſe manifeſted by people in our profeſſion, drew upon me a charge of prudery: they could not reconcile to themſelves upon any other principle, the idea of my contracting ſo rooted an antipathy to a ſtate which nature ſeems to have intended for the general convenience and happineſs of human kind, and for he benefit of mutual harmony. I however continued inflexible to their intreaties, and left them at liberty to put what conſtruction upon my behaviour they thought proper, fully determined to reject every overture which I might receive in the matrimonial way, however flattering to my ambition, or ſoothing to my pride.

" This reſolution, which I publickly made them acquainted with, was the means of putting a ſtop to their ſolicitations, and of producing to myſelf a temporary ſhelter from the ardour of their addreſſes, which, however amuſing I conſidered it at firſt, began at length to give me no ſmall uneaſineſs.

" We remained in Cheſter about two months, and from thence proceeded into Lancaſhire, where an accident happened which occaſioned for a while a ſuſpenſion to our whole plan of operations, and reduced us to the neceſſity of returning by the way we

we came, and of ſeeking ſome change to our fortunes, by courting the friendſhip and hoſpitality of the more civilized inhabitants of the South,

CHAP. XX.

The Danger of neglecting our Superiors. The unexpected Appearance of an old Acquaintance. The Adventures of a Female Vagabond, in which are deſcribed the Evils ariſing from libidinous Paſſions.

"THE town to which we directed our ſteps was Preſton; here we began to prepare ourſelves for a ſhort theatrical ſeaſon, when all our expectations were fruſtrated by an unforeſeen event, and ſuch as in a moment reduced us from the pinnacle of hope to the dungeon of the blackeſt deſpair.

"It will be neceſſary to remark, that we had in general made it a rule, previous to the opening our dramatic ſtores, to aſk permiſſion of the neighbouring juſtices, under whoſe protection and patronage we ran the leſs riſk of drawing upon ourſelves the ſeverity of the law, or the inconveniencies ariſing from legal informations.

"The manager, by ſome accident or other, had unfortunately omitted this ceremony, which was conſidered as a crime of ſo atrocious a nature by a majority of the Preſton magiſtrates, that in the heat of their reſentment they iſſued warrants, by virtue of which we were all preſently dragged before them, and, without giving us the leaſt opportunity of vindicating or even of exculpating ourſelves, we were in an inſtant committed as vagrants to the Houſe of Correction.

"I now, for the firſt time, began heartily to repent of the aſſociation I had formed: I ſaw the uncertainty of truſting to the favour of thoſe who

conſidered a manifeſtation of their own authority as a matter of much more conſequence than the preſervation of the liberties of their fellow creatures, and I nearly formed a reſolution of for ever quitting ſo dangerous a connection whenever ſuch an opportunity was afforded me.

" Three months were we doomed as reſidents in this habitation of miſery, nor is it eaſy to comprehend the variety of hardſhips we ſuffered during that period. Subject to the contumacies and inſults of the moſt unfeeling part of mankind, whilſt labouring under a deprivation, of itſelf ſufficiently horrid.— our exiſtence became burthenſome and our minds the abode of melancholy.

" One day as I was taking what little exerciſe the contractedneſs of the priſon would permit me, I ſaw a perſon ſtanding near me with whoſe face I was not altogether unacquainted: the more that I regarded her the more was I aſſured that I had ſeen her before, when, drawing near the ſpot where ſhe was ſtanding, to my utter aſtoniſhment I recollected the identical features of my old ſervant Jenny, through whoſe turpitude and ingratitude I had endured a tedious and horrid confinement in the Marſhalſea.

" The moment ſhe perceived me, her countenance betrayed the moſt evident marks of confuſion: ſeeing it however impoſſible to avoid me, ſhe ſeemed determined to make a virtue of neceſſity, and, endeavouring to appear as calm as poſſible, accoſted me nearly as follows:

" I know not, Madam, what may be your ſenti-
" ments at finding me in this place, or how you
" may be inclined to receive me after the uſage you
" experienced from my hands; I acknowledge my
" crime and the ingratitude with which I returned
" your favour and friendſhip: I am now in your
" power, alike open to your mercy or reſentment,

and

" and only depending on the *former* by a conviction " of the pain it would give you in an exertion of the " *latter*."

" I was ſo much ſurprized at the unexpected diſcovery I had made, together with reflecting on the ſingularity of ſo ingenuous a confeſſion, that I was for a while incapable of affording her a reply: however, having ſomewhat recovered myſelf from the aſtoniſhment this adventure had occaſioned, I expoſtulated with her on the inhumanity of her ungenerous behaviour to me, and on the misfortunes I had experienced in conſequence thereof. I notwithſtanding aſſured her, that ſhe had nothing to apprehend from any reſentment of mine, as I had long ſince entirely forgot it, and was at preſent only ſorry to find her in ſo melancholy a ſituation.

" The lenity which I conducted myſelf towards her, affected her in a very particular manner; burſting into a flood of tears, ſhe once more acknowledged her ingratitude, and how little deſerving ſhe was of the favour I had promiſed her, and ſoliciting my attention for a few minutes, ſhe further addreſſed me in manner following:

" I will not, Madam, endeavour to juſtify my " conduct, I will not even attempt to excuſe it; I " am convinced of its baſeneſs, I am convinced of " its criminality; but when you have heard my un- " happy ſtory, if you ſhould think that I merit a " place in your compaſſion, I ſhall conſider the ac- " cident which has thus wonderfully thrown me in " your way as circumſtance of more real importance " to my peace and happineſs, than will ſerve to " counterbalance the horrors of my preſent ſituation " and the unpromiſing ſtate of my future proſpects.

" Young and giddy, I had not long been under " your roof before I contracted an acquaintance with " the moſt abandoned of thoſe, who, meant for our

" protection, are unhappily too often employed in
" inventing the means of effecting our everlasting
" ruin and destruction.

" Trusting implicity to his professions of love and
" affection, I soon fell a prey to those arts which
" are too well calculated to answer the ends for
" which they are designed. Not contented with the
" triumph he had thus meanly obtained over my
" virtue, his next attempt was levelled at my ho-
" nesty: how well he succeeded I shall leave you,
" Madam, to judge, who was so material a sufferer
" by the event.

" Heaven knows with what reluctance I yielded
" to his entreaties!—I argued with him; I expostu-
" lated with him on the barbarity, on the ingrati-
" tude of the attempt, but all in vain!—he remain-
" ed deaf and inexorable to all I could offer, and
" threatened, unless I obliged him with an imme-
" diate compliance, not only to expose my weakness
" and infamy to the world, but likewise to wreck
" upon me the most severe marks of his displeasure
" and indignation.

" Finding there was no other method of satis-
" fying him, I at length, though unwillingly, ac-
" quiesced with his desire, and same evening (know-
" ing you would be absent) was agreed upon to ex-
" ecute a crime which has justly laid me open to
" the charge of ingratitude and unfeeling barbarity.

" You may probably wonder, Madam, how I
" contrived to keep our meetings so long a secret,
" but when you recollect the frequency of your the-
" atrical engagements and the opportunities you
" thereby afforded us, you will readily comprehend
" the truth of my relation as far as respects the time
" and place of our interviews, and perceive how ea-
" sily he was furnished with the means of seducing
" my affections and corrupting my fidelity.

" The

"The moment I had made him maſter of the "treaſure upon which he had ſo much directed his "attention, regarding me with a moſt contemptuous "look, he reviled me for my folly in truſting to his "profeſſions of love; aſked me, with a ſeverity of "accent to which I was totally unaccuſtomed, if "any but myſelf could ſo far forget the gratitude due "to the many favours I had received, as to reduce "a generous, an unſuſpecting friend to the loweſt "period of poverty, and that merely by way of com-"penſation for the truſt and confidence ſo undeſerv-"ingly repoſed in me?

"Every ſyllable of thoſe unkind expreſſions ſtab-"bed me to the heart; I found to late, that I had "fallen a ſacrifice to the artifices of a villain, who "having gained his purpoſe, was truly indifferent in "regard to what might become of me, or where I "wandered for the preſervation of my life and li-"berty, both endangered by placing a too eaſy faith "in his pernicious councils.

"Unmoved at my affliction, he told me that it "would be ungenerous to deceive me with hopes "of continuing any longer with him; that the in-"gratitude I had rendered my miſtreſs, would prove "but an ill ſecurity upon which to build any expec-"tation of his own ſafety, and that he was there-"fore determined to leave me to the comfortable re-"flections ariſing from a conſciouſneſs of guilt and "the apprehenſions of meeting with the puniſhment "ſuch unexampled wickedneſs merited.—

"Having thus finally declared his intention, he "departed and left me the bittereſt ſenſations of rage, "remorſe, horror, and confirmed deſpair.

"In this manner did my crime conſtitute its own "chaſtiſement, and in this ſort was I rewarded for "my credulity in relying on the profeſſions of a man, "who having impoſed upon my weakneſs by per-

"ſuading

" ſuading me to the commiſſion of vice, by which
" he alone was benefitted, was afterwards the inſtru-
" ment to upbraid me for my temerity, and to leave
" me in the labyrinth of trouble in which he him-
" ſelf had involved me.

" I know not how it was that I refrained from
" an immediate attempt upon my life: my rage how-
" ever ſomewhat ſubſiding, my next care was taken
" up in thinking of the means of providing for a fu-
" ture ſubſiſtence, I would have returned back into
" the country to my friends, but my guilt ſo ſtrong-
" ly dwelt upon my mind, that I was fearful of meet-
" ing with any one who had formerly known me,
" thinking that they would read in my face the enor-
" mity of my tranſgreſſion.

" I continued ſome little while longer in town
" till ſuch time as I had nearly diſpoſed of all my
" cloaths, when, perceiving no probability of hear-
" ing of any employment as a domeſtic, I procured
" a miſerable ſupport by working in the neighbour-
" ing gardens, the drudgery of which was much
" more ſuited to the ſtrength and ability of the
" other ſex, than it was to the delicacy of ours;
" however, as there was no other alternative, I
" was happy at having it in my power to provide
" myſelf with the neceſſaries of life at any rate.

" To add to my misfortune I found myſelf with
" child the conſideration of which operated ſo
" ſtrongly upon my mind as to fill me with moſt
" direful apprehenſions.

" The violence of my ſufferings, in the end, ter-
" minated in a miſcarriage, which reduced me to
" ſo ſhocking a condition, that death itſelf had been
" infinately preferable to it.

" Think, Madam, what were my reflections at
" this inſtant!—I was conſcious of having merited
" but too much every thing I had endured, nor

" could

" could I arraign the juſtice of Providence it thus
" wiſely ordaining me to ſuffer by the means of my
" own folly and wickedneſs.

" My youth and ſtrength of conſtitution having
" aſſiſted me ſo far as to get over an indiſpoſition
" which for a while threatened a fatal concluſion,
" I reſumed my former employ, and during the re-
" mainder of the ſummer I fared as well as could
" be expected from the violence of my labours and
" the unpromiſing ſtate of my finances.

" The winter coming on I was conſtrained to
" to take up with a wandering life, and to depend
" upon the alms of the charitable: the ſuccours I
" received however, by theſe means were greatly
" inadequate to my wants, though of themſelves
" but trifling, and I ſometimes paſſed whole days
" without partaking of the leaſt nouriſhment, ſo
" greatly was my diſtreſs enhanced my the inhu-
" manity of the world.

" Loſt to all fears of danger, I thus inſenſibly
" wandered from county to county, evermore ex-
" poſed to the inſults of the unfeeling and the mo-
" ckeries of the rabble; without a home, without
" a friend, and frequently without the pow-
" er of providing the neceſſary ſubſiſtence which
" nature in her bounty intended every one of her
" children to partake of without exception.

" Yeſterday, chance, or perhaps ſome greater
" divinity, directed me to this town, where I had
" never been before, and which I entered under
" the pleaſing expectation of meeting with ſome
" charitable aſſiſtance, which might be the means
" of enabling me to return back again towards
" London. The magiſtrates however, with a ſe-
" verity that does no great honour to their boaſted
" humanity, committed me here as a vagrant, till
" ſuch time as they have an opportunity of paſſing
" me to my own pariſh.

" Thus,

"Thus, Madam, have I given you a plain and "undiſguiſed narrative of every circumſtance rela- "tive to my former conduct and preſent ſituation: "the attention with which you have favoured my "ſtory, demands every acknowledgement I am en- "abled to offer: would to heaven it was in my "power to cancel the treatment you received from "me! however, if the moſt ſincere remorſe can be "the inſtrument of creating your compaſſion or "mitigating your juſt reſentment at the criminali- "ty of my conduct towards you, be aſſured, that "ſo far from remaining inſenſible of my indiſcreti- "ons, I have ſcarcely enjoyed a moment's peace "ſince the fatal inſtant which bore witneſs to your "diſappointment and my ingratitude."

"Nothwithſtanding my ſorrow at finding her in her preſent diſagreeable ſituation, I was nevertheleſs pleaſed when I reflected on her repentance: ſhe had it is true deceived me before, and probably might again; however, I ſaw every mark of ſincerity in her preſent behaviour, and ſuch as convinced me that her grief was unfeigned, and entirely proceeded from the heart.

"The troubles ſhe had experienced in conſe- quence of her too great credulity, had moreover ſufficiently puniſhed her for her imprudence, and taught her a leſſon that might ſerve for the remain- der of her life.

"I ſtrove all I could to convince her of my for- giveneſs, and with what pleaſure I ſhould embrace every opportunity of rendering her any ſervice in my power. Theſe expreſſions of my regard ſerving however only to make her more miſerable, from the reflection of her own miſconduct and how little I had merited the return I had met with from her, determined me to ſay no more to her on that head, but

but to leave her to herſelf untill ſuch time as the violence of her feelings was ſomewhat abated.

" In a few days ſhe was ordered to prepare for her departure: with tears in her eyes we mutually took leave of each other, and that ſhe might not depart empty handed, I forced her to accept of half what the variety and extent of my misfortunes had left in my ability to beſtow, and ſhe quitted me, agitated by an hundred different paſſions, amongſt which her wonder and gratitude were not the leaſt conſiderable.

CHAP. XXI.

In which Mrs. Gilbert *concludes the Story of her Adventures. Animadverſions thereon, comprehending the Duty of conjugal Affection. Remarkable Inſtances of the Goodneſs of Providence; and the abſurdity of indulging a Refinement of Sentiment to a great Degree.*

" THE term of our impriſonment was now fully expired, in conſequence of which we received ſtrict orders from the magiſtrates to depart with all convenient ſpeed beyond the limits of their juriſdiction, upon pain of taking a further leaſe of our miſerable habitation, which having no inclination to do, we very readily agreed to the former part of their propoſal, and in conformity thereunto prepared ourſelves for decamping.

" The neceſſary and unavoidable expences of our confinement had been the cauſe of greatly impoveriſhing our fortunes, and in fact rendered us almoſt incapable of reſuming our theatrical attempts; however, as there was an abſolute neceſſity for our removing, we returned by the way of Staffordſhire, where we once more renewed our endeavours, not forgetting

forgetting previouſly to ſolicit the indulgence of the magiſtrates, which indeed was ſeldom refuſed us.

"In ſpite of all our care and œconomy we could not however retrieve our circumſtances in any meaſure: poverty with never-dying hate followed us ſo cloſely, that we found the greateſt difficulties to encounter we had ever yet experienced; our little troop was abſolutely diſheartened; the manager almoſt grown deſperate, and every member of our company intent only on his own preſervation.

"In this ſtate of diſappointment and vexation we once more reſumed our wanderings, although with little better ſucceſs than formerly. The trifling dependence which I lately poſſeſſed (excluſive of the profits of my profeſſion) was now entirely exhauſted; my clothes and moveables of every kind were diſpoſed of; my peace invaded; my patience deſtroyed, and my whole frame and diſpoſition of mind ſoured by a continued ſeries of misfortune and aggravated horror.

"It will perhaps ſeem ſtrange, if after the above account of myſelf I ſhould declare, that I enjoyed an innate ſatisfaction and happineſs impoſſible for the hand of affliction to impair to alter: yet true it is, every time I reflect on the freedom I partook of in a ſeparation from Mr. Gilbert, the turpitude of whoſe intentions I had the greateſt reaſon to ſuſpect; every time I conſidered how infinitely my preſent ſituation (bad as it was) was preferable to proſtitution, diſeaſe, or a mad-houſe; I was comforted, I was pleaſed, and I was happy!

"My ſpirits, ſuperiour to the general run of my ſex, gave a vivacity to my looks that ſeemed to indicate a heart devoid of care; nor would any one, unacquainted with the particulars of my adventures, conclude otherwiſe, than that my days had been bleſſed with unvaried tranquillity and my nights with uninterupted repoſe.—

"Having

"Having almoſt completed the tour of North Wales, we proceeded to try our fortunes in the more ſouthern parts, for which purpoſe we arrived about a week ago at Cardiff, where, not meeting with all the ſucceſs we looked for, we prepared ourſelves for a ſtill further trial of what Fate might intend to perform in our favour; when repearing to this village, all our expectations were in an inſtant blaſted by an unlucky accident, which threatens to create a total impediment to our intended purſuits, and to plunge us into calamities ſuch as we have not yet experienced.

"Thus have I preſented you, Sir, with a faithful relation of the particulars of a life which hitherto has been only remarkable for its misfortunes and the extent of its ſufferings. For your attention to it I am greatly indebted: I wiſh the amuſement you may have received from thence, may be ſufficient to repay you for the trouble it has occaſioned; however, herein I have only obeyed your command, which I am happy in having it in my power to do; and whatever reprehenſion you may think due unto my conduct, remember this, that my errors, if deſerving of that name, aroſe from a ſenſibility of heart agitated with reflecting on the ſufferings of another, from a ſuſceptibility of ſentiment, and from a regard for the principles of virtue and the laws of humamanity."

Mrs. Gilbert, having thus finiſhed her narative, Mr. Lloyd thanked her for the trouble ſhe had been at, and as the evening was pretty far advanced, he was prevented for the preſent from making any obſervations on what he had heard, by the entrance of Mrs. Gwynn, who informed them that ſupper was on the table.

During this ſhort meal an uninterupted ſilence was obſerved, both with reſpect to Mr. Lloyd as well

well as our heroine; the former was buſied in reflecting upon the remarkable ſtory he had juſt heard, and the latter was ſufficiently employed in conſulting the means of enſuring a future proviſion, which from her preſent ſituation did not afford the moſt flattering proſpect.

As ſoon as the cloth was removed, Mr. Lloyd addreſſed himſelf to her in the following terms:

"I need not, Madam, explain to you with what "attention I have honoured your relation. The "various ſcenes you have experienced; the hard-"ſhips you have encountered; the misfortunes you "have endured, and the inſults and oppreſſions to "which you have ſo frequently been expoſed, have "all been felt by me in the detail with the moſt "ſympathetic force and affection.

"In tracing you through this ſucceſſion of ad-"ventures, I however ſtrongly diſcover the pro-"tecting hand of Providence buſily employed in "your favour. At one moment we find you de-"prived of your property by the unexpected bank-"ruptcy of a man to whom you had entruſted your "all, and whilſt on the very brink of deſpair, we "behold you on a ſudden reſtored to your uſual "tranquility by an alliance with one, who, whate-"ver may be his faults and imperfections, or how "highly criminal ſoever his conduct may have been "to others, always behaved to you with tender-"neſs and unaffected regard.

"In conſequence of a romantic ſingularity of "ſentimentt we next find you friendleſs, forlorn, "and deſtitute, expoſed to the charitableneſs and "inhumanity of an unfeeling woman, and ignorant "in what manner to proceed. Here the proof of "a providential interpoſition ſtands incontroverti-"ble: in the kindneſs of the Hilton family, you

"found

" found a reception ſuperior to your hopes, and a
" retreat ſuperiour to your wiſhes.

" In the Marſhalſea, we ſtill perceive the ſame
" care and attention manifeſted in your favour:
" when upon the eve of periſhing, unable to pro-
" cure the neceſſaries of life, and ſurrounded on all
" ſides by the moſt aggravated horror and wretched-
" neſs in an inſtant you are enabled to withſtand the
" torrent of affliction, which every way approach-
" ed big with deſtruction, and even to extend a
" timely relief to the calamities of a fellow ſuffer-
" er. In all theſe inſtances, we have to reverence
" that Power which protected you from the dan-
" gers of deſpair and from the hand of death.

" The leſſons you have been taught by means of
" the troubles to which you have ſo long been ex-
" poſed, are well worth treaſuring in the repoſitory
" of your mind, as invaluable truths deduced from
" experience, and replete with knowledge and in-
" formation.

" I ſhall now conſider your conduct and the
" motive thereof in the rational lights of morality
" and prudential propriety.

" I wiſh I could beſtow on it the approbation
" you, Madam, may probably think it merits: I
" am, however, ſorry to inform you, that I am ſo
" far from thinking it deſerving of approbation,
" that I am inclined to beſtow on it the moſt ſevere
" reprehenſion.

" You will pardon me, Madam, if my opinions
" ſhould be conveyed in a language different from
" that generally made uſe of to your ſex; I am, it is
" true, rude in ſpeech, but you will find me never-
" theleſs, a friend worthy your eſteem and deſerv-
" ing of your confidence.

" You left your huſband, for ſuch he certainly
" is—You left him, upon a mere romantic affecta-
" tion

" tion of a virtue, which your ſubſequent behaviour
" has ſhewn you to be totally unacquainted with.
" The narrative of a ſtranger, (perhaps actuated by
" motives of intereſt, or probably guided by miſtake)
" independent of every neceſſary corroboration and
" without the experience of even a ſingle harſh ex-
" preſſion whereon to found a juſtification, ſhall oc-
" caſion a woman, ſurrounded with every domeſtic
" ſatisfaction and in poſſeſſion of all the happineſs
" moderation could wiſh the enjoyment of, to quit
" her home and expoſe herſelf to the dangers and
" contempt of the world, unmindful of her own re-
" putation, and regardleſs of her huſband's honour!

" The folly and abſurdity, Madam, of ſo im-
" competent a plea will not admit of debate; had
" you even been aſſured of the truth of the charge
" exhibited againſt Mr. Gilbert,—had you been
" convinced that he was meriting of the infamy with
" which he ſtands loaded, you ſhould have endea-
" voured to reclaim him from the enormity of his
" tranſgreſſions by adminiſtering to him the whole-
" ſome advice of conjugal duty; you ſhould have
" pictured to him the unprofitableneſs and deformi-
" ty of vice, the beauty of virtue, and the inward
" ſatisfaction reſulting from a life of piety and mo-
" ral rectitude; and finally, you ſhould have been
" foremoſt in the performance of religious rites,
" and by your own example have encouraged him
" to a love of thoſe principles, by a ſtrict adherence
" to which, we look for peace here and everlaſting
" happineſs hereafter.

" Inſtead of a behaviour ſo exemplary, in how
" different a light are we conſtrained to review your
" conduct: indiſcreetly wandering from place to
" place, ſubject to inconveniencies and liable to dan-
" gers ſhocking to the natural delicacy of your ſex,
" purſuing a life of itinerancy, which Virtue would

" contemn

" contemn and Reaſon bluſh to own; whilſt your " huſband, innocent perhaps of all that is alledged " againſt him, is lamenting, the depravity of your " conduct in ſo unaccountably diſſolving every ma- " trimonial tie, or probably deſpairing of ever more " experiencing a return to his domeſtic felicity, is " ſeeking a relief from the ſeverity of his reflections " in the fatal reſources of impiety and intemperance.

" If I am too warm in thus remonſtrating to you " on a conduct ſo deſerving of reprehenſion, attri- " bute it to my friendſhip, which is the ſole induce- " ment which moves me to the liberty I am taking; " in the mean time look upon this houſe as your " home; if after the ſuperior retirement you enjoyed " at Mr. Hilton's, you ſhould think this place de- " ſerving of your notice, I have only to add, that a " hearty welcome awaits your acceptance of the con- " veniencies it affords.

" Beſides, it is my intention in the morning to " make a farther inquiry reſpecting the unfortunate " men with whom you came to this village; ſhould " they in fact be undeſerving of the guilt with which " they are charged, it would be generous to aſſiſt " them in their misfortunes; but if on the contrary, " their crimes render them obnoxious to the laws of " their country, it is but juſt that they ſhould ſuffer " the puniſhment awaiting their temerity and the " criminality of their behaviour."

Mrs. Gilbert, tho' not altogether pleaſed with the ſeverity with which he had animadverted on her conduct, nevertheleſs thanked him for his candour and the apparent ſincerity of his profeſſions.

She did not endeavour to vindicate in every meaſure the propriety of the ſteps ſhe had taken, as knowing the ſorrows and afflictions ſhe had ſo amply endured were of themſelves ſufficient puniſhment for any trifling indiſcretions ſhe might have been guilty of

of in the heat of her resentment, and that whatever might be the censure inflicted on her by the more rigid part of mankind, she had however preserved her honour inviolate amidst every temptation, and amidst every vicissitude of Fortune and Chance.

It being now time to retire to rest, she having wished Mr. Lloyd an uninterrupted repose, once more took possession of her last night's apartment, and as she had that day undergone considerable fatigue of mind in the relation of her adventures, it was not long before she experienced a temporary relief to all her troubles by sinking insensibly into the enjoyment of a profound sleep.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.